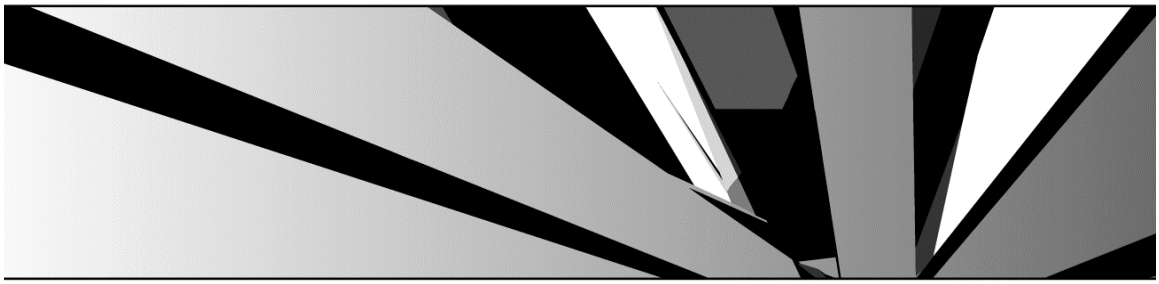
INTEGRAL SPIRITUAL CENTER



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What Is Integral Spirituality?

Ken Wilber

(first draft, June 2005)

Integral Spirituality

The Role of Spirituality in the Modern and Postmodern World

(Presentation for the Inaugural Gathering of Integral Spiritual Center)

Ken Wilber

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The following is a summary of two works about to be published—volume 2 of the Kosmos Trilogy and *The Many Faces of Terrorism*—as they relate directly to the role of spirituality in the modern and postmodern world.

Both of those works present what has come to be called the Integral Approach. More specifically, the approach is called **AQAL** (ah-qwul), which is short for "all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types." As is the nature of any new approach, you have to explain it to newcomers before you can use it. This is a lose-lose situation. It is irritating to people who already know the system, and irritating to people who have to learn it for the first time. So this will be an irritating essay for everybody.

Still, I shall plug ahead, with the comforting assurance that this crowd is used to dispensing forgiveness.

Nonetheless, for newcomers, it might be best to read a few introductory pieces first.[1] I am going to cover all of the background ideas, but I will do so at a fairly quick pace. Please understand that any abruptness or dogmatic delivery is simply because I have covered these ideas at great length in other treatises, so I always get a little loose, shall we say, in these types of summary statements, so don't mistake this style as a form of argument. About half of the paper is an overview of AQAL, and the other half is what amounts to a manifesto for an Integral Spirituality.

The following is a very rough first draft, so please continue practicing forgiveness in that regard as well.

I won't give a summary of the conclusions this essay reaches, but simply point out that it addresses perhaps 4 or 5 of the most pressing issues concerning spirituality—such as stages of spiritual development, meditative training, Eastern and Western approaches to religion—and their relation to currents in the modern and postmodern world.

I do believe that this essay points the way to a role for religion in the modern and postmodern world that has been overlooked entirely, and this radically new role for religion not only works, it holds a very real type of salvation for humanity on the whole.

Introduction: Integral Methodological Pluralism

We start with the simple observation that the "metaphysics" of the spiritual traditions have been thoroughly trashed by both modernist and postmodernist epistemologies, and there has as yet arisen nothing compelling to take their place. So

this paper begins with an overview of the methodologies available that can be used to reconstruct the spiritual systems of the great wisdom traditions but with none of their metaphysical baggage.

Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) involves, among other things, at least 8 fundamental and apparently irreducible methodologies, injunctions, or paradigms for gaining reproducible knowledge (or verifiably repeatable experiences). The fundamental claim of AQAL Integral Theory is that any approach that leaves out any of these 8 paradigms is a less-than-adequate approach according to available and reliable human knowledge at this time.

The easiest way to understand IMP is to start with what is known as the **quadrants**, which suggest that any occasion possesses an inside and an outside, as well as an individual and a collective, dimension. Taken together, this gives us the inside and the outside of the individual and the collective. These are often represented as I, you/we, it, and its (a variation on first-, second-, and third-person pronouns; another variation is the Good, the True, and the Beautiful; or art, morals, and science, and so on—namely, the objective truth of exterior science, or it/its; the subjective truth of aesthetics, or I; and the collective truth of ethics, or thou/we).[2]

Figure 1 is a schematic of some of the phenomena found in the quadrants according to reliable knowledge communities working with them. We often refer to any event as a **holon**—a "whole/part," or a whole that is a part of other wholes—and thus each of the items labeled in the various quadrants can also be referred to as a holon (e.g., in the UR quadrant, a molecule is a holon that contains whole atoms and is contained by whole cells; in the UL, a concept is a holon that contains whole symbols and is contained by whole rules, and so on).

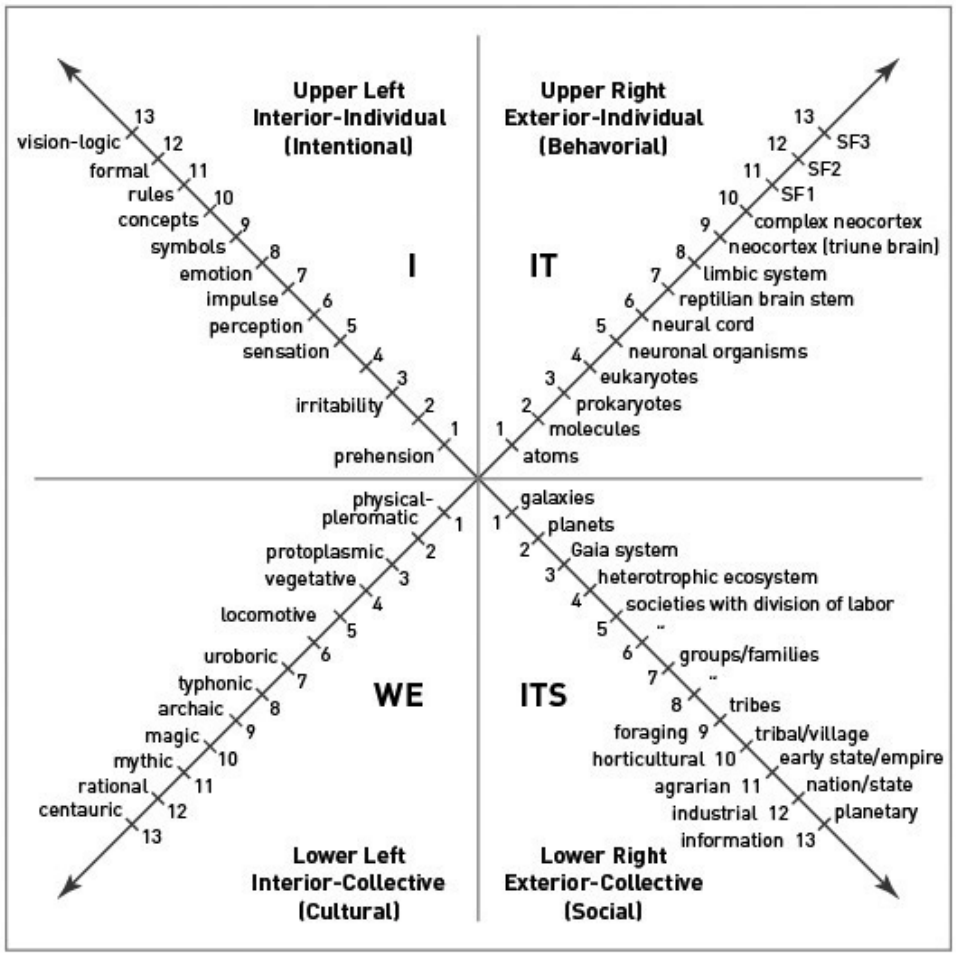

Fig. 1. 4 Quadrants.

Now here, as they say, is where it gets interesting. If you imagine any of the phenomena (or holons) in the various quadrants, you can look at them from their own inside or outside. This gives you **8 fundamental perspectives**—the inside and the outside view of a holon in any of the 4 quadrants.[3]

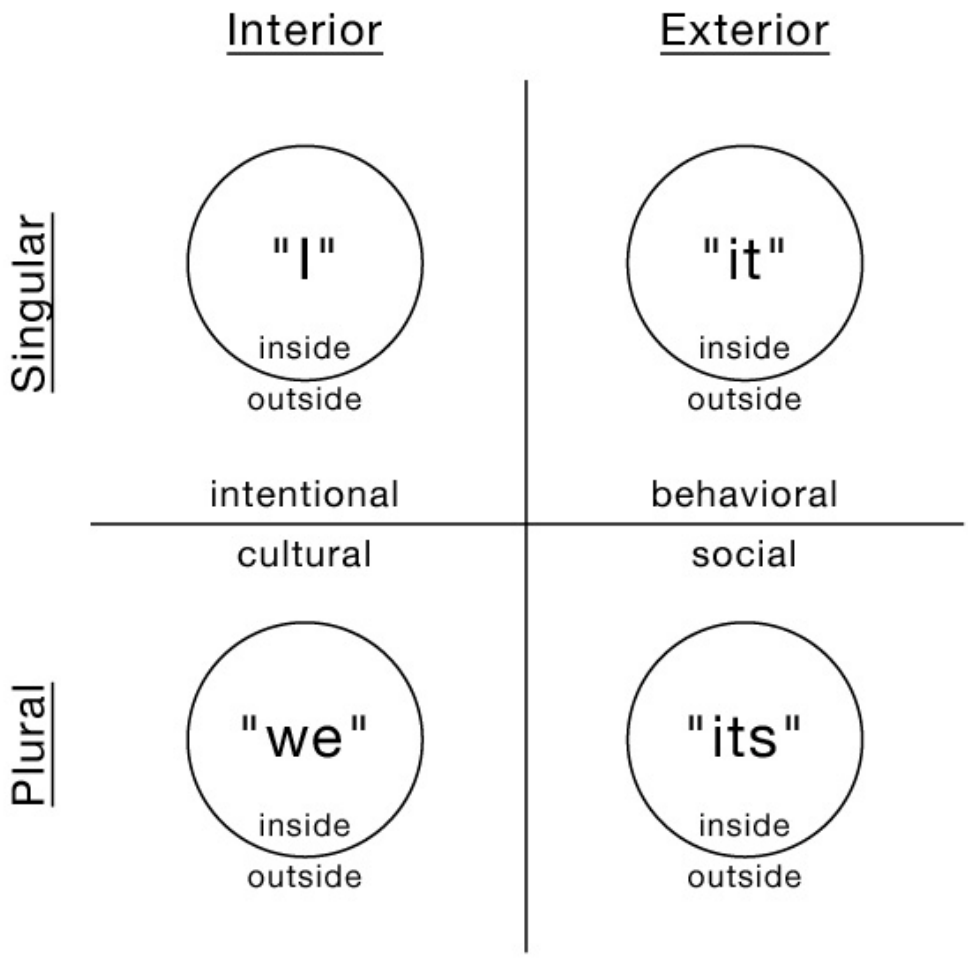

Fig. 2. 8 Fundamental Perspectives.

These 8 fundamental perspectives of any occasion are summarized in figure 2. These 8 fundamental perspectives also involve 8 fundamental methodologies. Some of the more well-known of these methodologies are summarized in figure 3. These methodologies taken together are referred to as “Integral Methodological Pluralism.”

The idea is simple enough. Start with any phenomenon (or holon) in any of the quadrants—for example, the experience of an “I” in the UL quadrant. That “I” can be

looked at from the inside or the outside. I can experience my own "I" *from the inside*, in this moment, as the felt experience of being a subject of my present experience, a first person having a first-person experience. If I do so, the results include such things as introspection, meditation, phenomenology, contemplation, and so on (all simply summarized as **phenomenology** in fig. 3).

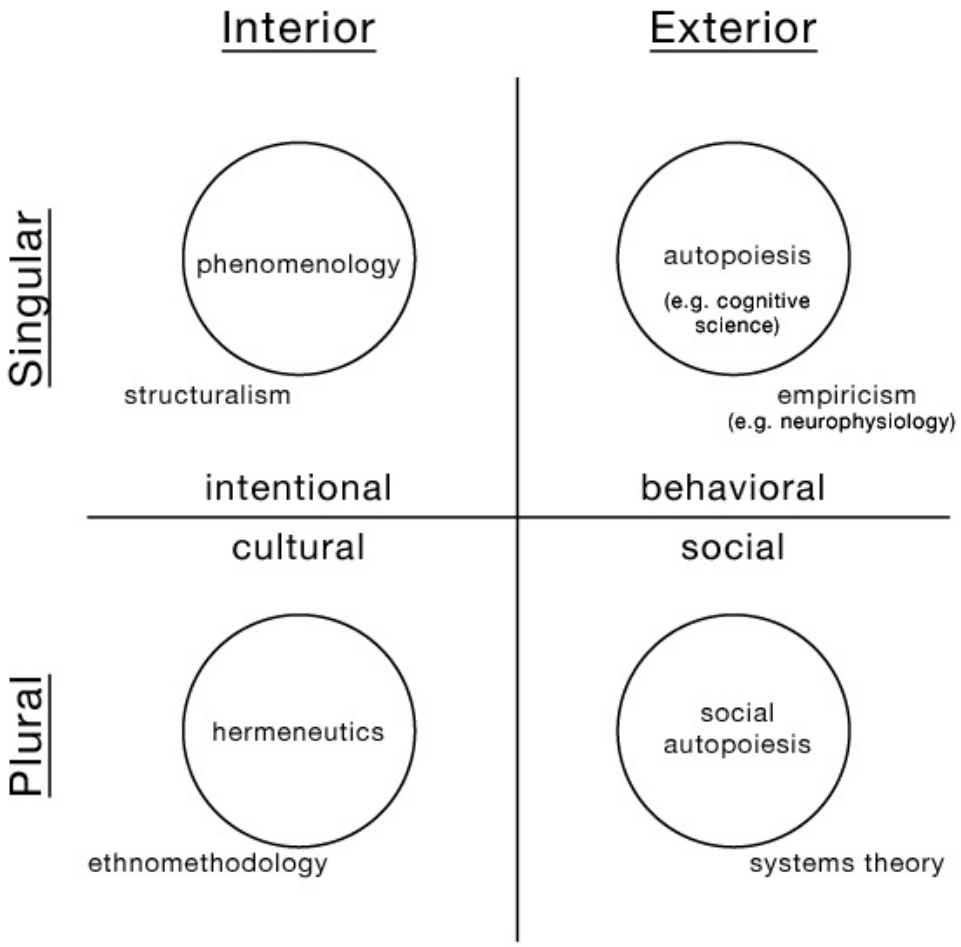

Fig. 3. 8 Major Methodologies.

But I can also approach this "I" from the outside, in a stance of an objective or "scientific" observer. I can do so in my own awareness (when I try to be "objective" about myself, or try to "see myself as others see me"), and I can also attempt to do this with other "I's" as well, attempting to be scientific in my study of how people experience their "I." The most famous of these scientific approaches to I-consciousness have included systems theory and **structuralism**.[4]

Likewise, I can approach the study of a "we" from its inside or its outside. *From the inside,* this includes the attempts that you and I make to understand each other right now. How is it that you and I can reach *mutual understanding* about anything, including when we simply talk to each other? How does your "I" and my "I" come together in something you and I both call "we" (as in, "Do you and I—do we—understand each other?"). The art and science of we-interpretation is typically called **hermeneutics**.

But I can also attempt to study this "we" *from the outside*, perhaps as a cultural anthropologist, or an ethnomethodologist, or a Foucauldian archaeologist, and so on (all of which are summarized in fig. 3 as **ethnomethodology**).

And so on around the quadrants. Thus, 8 basic perspectives and 8 basic methodologies.[5]

Let me give a very quick indication of why this becomes crucially important for today's spirituality. Many of you are familiar with **Spiral Dynamics**, a system of psychosocial development based upon Clare Graves's pioneering research on stages of value systems (if you're not familiar with SD, don't worry, we will summarize it later, at which point what I am about to say will make sense). SD is representative of the type of research that has been so valuable in understanding people's worldviews, values, and the stages of meaning-making that human beings go through.

And many of you are aware of the profound meditative states of awareness referred to generally as *sahaj* or *satori*, or illumination and awakening. These are states that are said by the great traditions to give knowledge or awareness of an ultimate reality.

Here's the point: you can sit on your meditation mat for decades, and you will NEVER see anything resembling the stages of Spiral Dynamics. And you can study Spiral Dynamics till the cows come home, and you will NEVER have a satori. And the integral point is, if you don't include both, you will likely never understand human beings or their relation to the Divine.

Meditative understanding involves preeminently a methodology of looking at the "I" from the inside (using phenomenology); SD involves studying it from the outside (using structuralism). Both of them are studying a person's consciousness, but they see very different things because they are inhabiting a different stance or perspective, using different methodologies.

There are many ways to divide and group these 8 basic perspectives. The 4 quadrants themselves are one way to do so. Another way is what we call the **4 zones**. The 4 zones reflect whether the holon is being looked at from within or from without.[6] This is shown in figure 4.

To return to Spiral Dynamics and meditation: when it comes to interior consciousness—or the Upper-Left quadrant—both zone-1 and zone-2 methodologies are crucially important types of knowledge, and both complement each other wonderfully. Taking both into account is absolutely essential for making any sort of progress in understanding the role of religion and spirituality in modern and postmodern world.

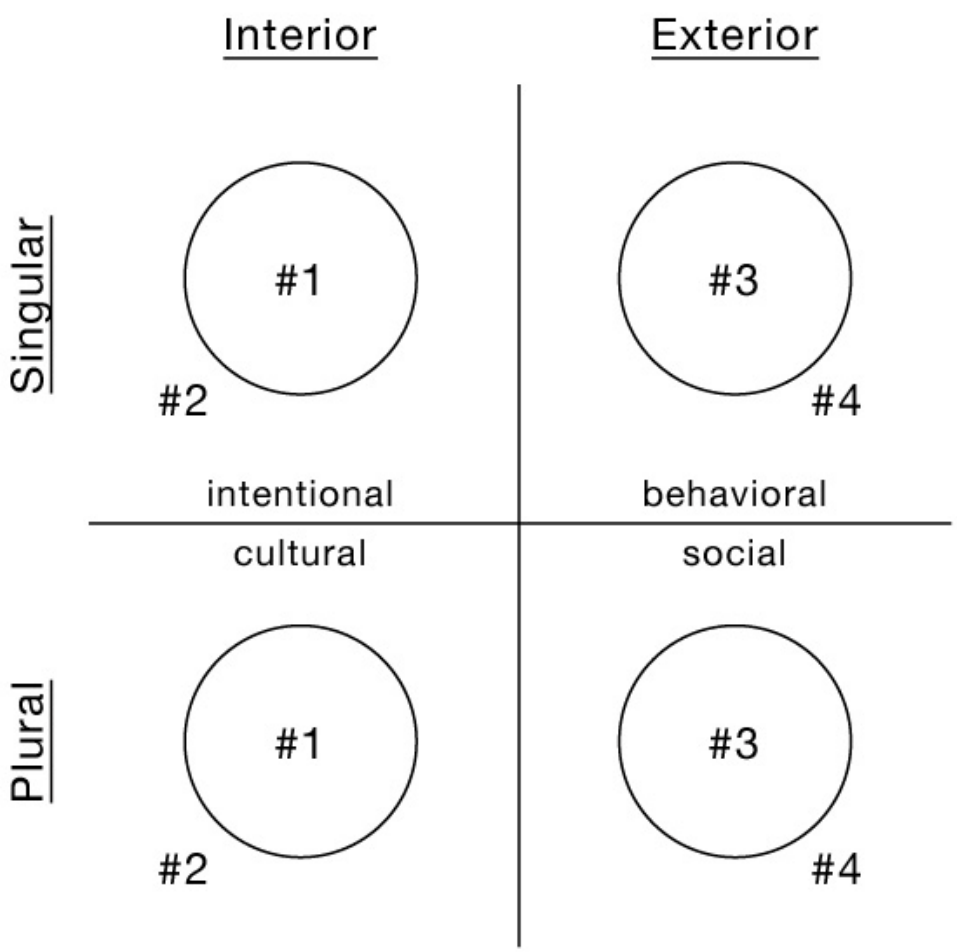

Fig. 4. 4 Zones.

Once we acknowledge the research and importance of both, the trick is to then understand how they are related. How are things like Spiral Dynamics and Zen related?

This is a primary topic of this paper, and beyond that, what does all this have to do with religion in the modern and postmodern world?

Integral Post-Metaphysics

For you advanced students out there, notice that the 8 methodologies are really giving us perspectives on perspectives on perspectives. For example, meditation involves the inside view of an interior view of an individual view. Francisco Varela's approach to biological phenomenology is the outside view of the inside view of the exterior view. Hermeneutics is the inside view of the interior view of the collective view. And so on.[7]

This leads to a new type of mathematical notation that we sometimes call "integral math," which replaces traditional variables with perspectives. (For you not-so-advanced students, don't worry about this section.) Using the shorthand of 1st person (for the inside in general) and 3rd person (for the outside in general), then Varela's view is **3-p x 1-p x 3p** (a third-person conceptualization of a first-person view from within the third person or "objective" organism). Meditation is **1-p x 1-p x 1p** (or the inside view of the interior awareness of my first person). Spiral Dynamics, as it relates to an individual, is **3-p x 1-p x 1p** (a third-person conceptual map of the interior awareness of a person), and so on. It can get much more complicated than that, with many more terms, but those are some examples for a start (you can actually build a type of mathematics here, with the equal sign representing "mutual understanding or resonance").[8]

With reference to Spiral Dynamics and meditation, you can see right in those equations that the first term in each phrase is different—quite different—in Spiral Dynamics (**3-p** x 1-p x 1p) and in meditation (**1-p** x 1-p x 1p**)**: the former is a third-person map of the interior territory, the latter, a first-hand account of the territory itself. There are some other important differences that we will get to in a minute, but you can start to see the useful distinctions that come from an Integral Methodological Pluralism.

This leads to an entirely new approach to metaphysics that is actually **post-metaphysics**, in that it requires none of the traditional baggage of metaphysics (such as postulating the existence of pre-existing ontological structures of a Platonic, archetypal, Patanjali, or Yogachara-Buddhist variety), and yet it can generate those structures if needed (as I will try to demonstrate later).

This **Integral Post-Metaphysics** replaces *perceptions* with *perspectives* (and thus re-defines samsara as the realm of perspectives, not things nor events nor structures nor processes nor systems nor vasanas nor archetypes nor dharmas, because all of those are perspectives before they are anything else, and cannot even be adopted or even stated without first assuming a perspective).

Thus, for example, the Whitehead and Buddhist notion of each moment being a momentary, discrete, fleeting subject that apprehends dharmas or momentary occasions, is itself a third-person generalization of first-person view of the reality in a first person (3-p x 1-p x 1p). Each moment is *not* a subject prehending an object, it is a perspective prehending a perspective—with Whitehead's version being a truncated version of that multifaceted occasion, a version that actually has a hidden monological metaphysics. Integral Post-Metaphysics can thus generate the essentials of Whitehead's view but without assuming Whitehead's hidden metaphysics.[9]

The same turns out to be true for the central assertions of the great wisdom traditions: an Integral Post-Metaphysics can generate their essential contours *without* assuming their extensive metaphysics. (If those example are a bit too abstract, we will return to this topic shortly with a better understanding.)

The problem with the Great Traditions is that their incredibly important truths could not easily withstand the critiques of either modernity or postmodernity. Modernist epistemologies subjected them to the demand for evidence, and because the premodern

traditions were ill-prepared for this onslaught, they did not meet this challenge with a direct elucidation of the phenomenological core of their contemplative traditions, which offered all the verifiable evidence one could want (contemplation was always a modern epistemology ahead of its time in a premodern world). Failing that, the premodern spiritual traditions, more or less in their entirety, were savaged and rejected by modernist epistemologies: modernity rejected premodernity altogether.

Not that it mattered much, because postmodernity rejected both. The important truth advanced by the postmodernist epistemologies is that all perceptions are actually perspectives, and *all perspectives are embedded in bodies and in cultures*, and not just in economic and social systems (which modernist epistemologies from Marx to systems theory had already spotted). Modernity flinched and then recoiled in the face of these postmodernist critiques. If modern epistemologies had a hard time handling these critiques, you can imagine how the premodern traditions fared.

Integral Methodological Pluralism highlights an array of fundamental perspectives, some of which the postmodernist epistemologies would particularly come to emphasize. In particular, AQAL insists that every occasion has a Lower-Left quadrant (intersubjective, cultural, contextual), and the quadrants "go all the way down."[10] In simpler terms, all knowledge is embedded in cultural or intersubjective dimensions. Even transcendental knowledge is a four-quadrant affair: the quadrants don't just go all the way down, they go all the way up, as well. It's turtles all the way down, and it's turtles all the way up.

As we will see throughout this essay, modernity focused on the Right-Hand quadrants of objective exterior evidence, while postmodernity focused on the Lower-Left quadrant of intersubjective truth and the social construction of reality. The premodern wisdom traditions, who had not focused on those 3 quadrants (and sometimes showed

no awareness of them), were simply no match for the productions of modernity and postmodernity in those domains. But there was one area that the Great Traditions still specialized in, an area not yet tapped into, or sometimes even recognized, by modernity and postmodernity, and that was the interior of the individual—the Upper-Left quadrant with all its states and stages of consciousness, realization, and spiritual experiences. By situating the great wisdom traditions in an integral framework they can be salvaged to a remarkable degree. Virtually the entire Great Chain fits into the Upper-Left quadrant (see "From the Great Chain to Postmodernity in 3 Easy Steps"). Shorn of its metaphysical baggage, the premodern wisdom traditions fit into an integral framework that allows modern and postmodern truths as well.

The Great Traditions Floundered on The Taboo of (Inter)Subjectivity

Here's an example of why taking these concerns into account is important for the contemplative traditions. Allan Wallace has written a wonderful book, *The Taboo of Subjectivity*, about the eventual domination of Western scientific materialism over interior introspection, resulting in a modern worldview hostile to contemplative and meditative traditions, East or West. This is certainly true. Modernist epistemologies were defined by their empirical nature, but it was an empiricism—which means "experientialism"—that was *originally* big enough for both UL phenomenology and UR behaviorism. In fact, William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, eulogized by Wallace, is a quintessential modernist epistemology (it replaces metaphysical postulates with experiential evidence, and it judges truth by its results, not supposed ontological referents). In other words, it is a pure phenomenology, or as James preferred to call it, a radical empiricism. But due to various currents, many skillfully elucidated in *The Taboo*

of Subjectivity, interior empiricism was rejected in favor of exterior empiricism, and the contemplative traditions went down with that ship, at least in the eyes of late modernity.

But again, when it came to the fate of meditation and introspection in the West, having modernity kill premodernity wasn't the only problem, or even the main problem, which was that postmodernity killed both. In fact, what the postmodernists attacked most vitriolically (and successfully) was the modernist phenomenology exemplified by a Husserl or a William James—or a Dogen or Eckhart or St. Teresa. Those were the objects of the postmodernist onslaught, and it was postmodernism that won the day in the Western humanities.

Thus, it wasn't just or even especially modern scientific materialism that killed introspection and phenomenology, not in the humanities, anyway. It was extensive and savage postmodern attacks on phenomenology (and all similar methodologies). Most postmodernists didn't even bother with science, they went straight after phenomenology. And the reason was as indicated: phenomenology failed to take into account the cultural embeddedness and the intersubjectivity of all awareness.

(Technically, the postmodernist critique would be: meditative awareness is the quintessential type of monological awareness, which is not conducted in dialogue but in interior monologue of pure "presence" and "bare attention": but far from liberating somebody, that mode of awareness merely cements their ignorance of their embeddedness, an ignorance that allows social and cultural interests—patriarchal, sexist, ethnocentric, androcentric—to ride undetected into the awareness of a meditator even during satori. Satori is therefore just a big cement job on intersubjective ignorance, allowing oppression and marginalization of dialogical realities: so much for the paths of liberation in the eyes of postmodernity.) It wasn't just the taboo of subjectivity that killed

the contemplative traditions, it was the taboo of intersubjectivity that the traditions themselves continued to display.

In other words, the double death suffered by the contemplative traditions in the last few centuries involved the taboo of subjectivity or interiority that was displayed by late modernity, and the taboo of intersubjectivity displayed by the traditions themselves. Thus the contemplative traditions were slammed by both modernity and postmodernity, and little survived that double onslaught, at least in the eyes of serious scholars and researchers. Modern science rejected the realities disclosed by contemplation, and so did the postmodern humanities.

General Outlines of Integral Epistemology

Integral Methodological Pluralism is one way of handling those difficult issues. It explicitly finds room for premodern truths, modern truths, and postmodern truths, all in an integral frame not of conclusions but of methodologies. Moreover, it doesn't "cheat" by watering down the various truths in such a horrid way they are hardly recognizable. It takes them more or less as it finds them. The only thing it alters is their claim to absoluteness.

Moreover, in ways we will return to later (when this will make more sense to an introductory reader), Integral Methodological Pluralism can generate the important truths of the contemplative traditions but without the metaphysical systems that would not survive modernist and postmodernist critiques, elements it turns out they don't really need, anyway.

I am not saying that AQAL (or IMP) is the only solution to these problems, simply that AQAL has explicitly taken all of them into serious account, and thus it is one way to proceed to integrate the best elements of premodern, modern, and postmodern currents

of humanity's self-understanding. An integral approach thus protects each of those currents from attacks by the other two.

Let's see an example of that by focusing on interior realities, including meditative and contemplative realities, and exploring some of the major approaches to those interior occasions.

Zone 2: The Scientific Study of the Interiors

Since we have mentioned Spiral Dynamics several times, let's start with that type of knowledge in the UL quadrant—namely, the inside of the interior, but looked at objectively or "scientifically" (3-p x 1-p x 1p). In other words, start with an occasion, look at its individual form (a first person or 1p), then look at the interior or first-person view of that individual (1-p x 1p), but do so from an objective, scientific, or third-person stance (3-p x 1-p x 1p). In figure 4, this is simplistically indicated by "zone 2" in the Upper-Left quadrant, namely, looking at a holon in the UL from the outside, which is exactly that Spiral Dynamics does.

This type of methodology has been central to some of the greatest discoveries of the modern Western approaches to consciousness. One of the most famous was that of Lawrence Kohlberg and moral development. Kohlberg took a large group of people and asked them questions like, "A poor man is married to a woman who has a terminal illness that an expensive medicine can cure. Does he have the right to steal the medicine?" Kohlberg found that people gave three different answers to that question: Yes, No, and Yes.

The first type of answer was, "Yes, he can steal the medicine, because what is right is anything that I say is right, and screw you." The second type of answer was, "No, he cannot steal it, because that is against the law, and so that would be horrible." The

third type was, “Yes, he can steal it, because life is worth more than a few dollars, and a larger good overrides a smaller evil.” These responses Kohlberg called preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. We often summarize these as **egocentric**, **ethnocentric**, and **worldcentric**.

Notice that both the *pre*-conventional (egocentric) and the *post*-conventional (worldcentric) answers are both Yes, and the conventional answer is No. If you are not familiar with this type of research, you might confuse pre-conventional and post-conventional simply because both give the same answer (“Yes”). You might assume that anybody saying “Yes, I can break the conventional law” is somehow a post-conventional rebel attempting to subvert dominant hierarchies in the name of a higher freedom. Maybe; and maybe they are simply saying, “Fuck you, nobody tells me what to do!” Because both PRE-conventional and POST-conventional are NON-conventional, they look alike to the untutored eye.

Confusing pre and post—or pre and trans—is called the **pre/post fallacy** or the **pre/trans fallacy**, and we will see that an understanding of this confusion is very helpful when it comes to the role of religion in the modern world. In any sequence—pre-rational to rational to trans-rational, or subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious, or pre-verbal to verbal to trans-verbal, or prepersonal to personal to transpersonal—the “pre” and “trans” components are often confused, and that confusion goes in both ways. Once they are confused, some researchers take all trans-rational realities and try to reduce them to pre-rational infantilisms (e.g., Freud), while others take some of the pre-rational infantile elements and elevate them to trans-rational glory (e.g. Jung). Both **elevationism** and **reductionism** follow from the same pre/trans fallacy.

To return to Kohlberg. Once he found that the response to his question fell into three classes (A: Yes; B: No; and C: Yes), he followed his group of test subjects over

several years. He found that if anybody started out with response B, they *always* moved to response C, never to response A. Somebody at A moved to B, and then to C, but never the other way around. In other words, his **classes** of responses were actually **stages** of responses.

This is very interestingly, to put it mildly. Why is there this *directionality* in the psyche? What are these sequential stages actually made of? Once it was determined that these sequential stages in the psyche exist, the next task was to determine the **structures** in the psyche that seemed to underlie these stages.

This type of research was the beginning of the incredibly influential approach known as **structuralism**. Pose a series of **questions** to large groups of people. See if their **responses** fall into any **classes**. If so, follow those classes over time and see if they emerge in a sequential order of **stages**. If so, attempt to determine the **structure** or makeup of those stages. Those are exactly the research steps in all genuine structuralism, and this discovery had a galvanizing effect on all of the humanities and many of the sciences. Virtually all of the today's stage conceptions—from Maslow to Graves to Loevinger to Kohlberg to Kegan—still follow exactly those research steps first outlined by the developmental structuralists.

Notice a few things right off. To begin with, if you are such a researcher, you are already dealing with the **interiors** of individuals, because *you cannot see these structures anywhere in the exterior world.* Interior realities—whether those of introspection, meditation, or phenomenology—can be seen nowhere in the exterior world. So this structural research already places you in the Left-Hand quadrants (and is already enough to get you thrown out of the positivistic camps).

But even though you are working with interior realities (1-p x 1p), you are taking an exterior, "scientific," or "third-person" view (3-p) of them. For example, when you

interview somebody at, say, moral-stage 1 (preconventional or egocentric), you yourself are NOT necessarily experiencing that egocentric stage, or any of the stages you are investigating. So you do not have a first-person (1-p) knowledge of that stage, although you might at some point. So, in the UL quadrant, you are doing something fundamentally different than the meditator, who wishes to have a first-person experience of certain states or stages. In figures 3 and 4, the Zen meditator is looking at the "I" holon from within (via phenomenology and introspection), the objective researcher, from without (via, e.g., structuralism). But both of you are investigating interior or Left-Hand or "invisible" realities (which would get both of you thrown out of the positivistic, exterior, or Right-Hand camps). But they will each see certain phenomena and patterns that *are invisible to the other*—which is the important point.[11]

The Historical (and Continuing) Importance of Structuralism

One of the major differences between phenomenology and structuralism is that phenomenology looks at the contents of the mind or the phenomena that arise in immediate experience or awareness, whereas structuralism looks for the hidden patterns that the phenomena or experiences follow. These hidden patterns or structures actually govern the phenomena but without the phenomena ever knowing it.

An analogy is a game of cards, say, poker. If you watch a game of poker, and you are a phenomenologist, then you will try to describe each card, each phenomena, with great accuracy and presence; you will note the all different face cards, suits, the markings on each card, and so on. You will experience all of the cards as intensely as you can. But the cards are actually following *rules*, and these rules *cannot be seen anywhere on the cards themselves*. The structuralist is looking for the rules—the

patterns, the structures—that actually govern the cards, and rules that are invisible to introspection, invisible to meditation, and invisible to phenomenology in general.

(This is why you can sit on your meditation mat for decades and never see anything resembling the stages of Spiral Dynamics. But vice versa: you can study Spiral Dynamics till the cows come home and never have a satori or enlightenment.)

Historically, the school of structuralism (in the narrow sense) began as a zone-2 approach to the Lower-Left quadrant (e.g., Levi-Strauss, Jakobson). That is, it attempted to do for a "we" the kinds of thing that Lawrence Kohlberg did for an "I": investigate these interior realities using "objective," "scientific," "third-person" approaches (although it did so several decades before Kohlberg, of course; he is avowedly in their footsteps).[12] It soon became obvious that the original approach of structuralism, ahistorical and collectivist, was unsatisfactory and needed to be modified. The first step was making it a historical and/or developmental structuralism (or genealogy); the second was differentiating it into those approaches dealing with individuals (UL) and those dealing with cultures (LL).

Developmental structuralism applied to individuals (the outside zone of UL) was given its first successful form by the pioneering genius of one of America's greatest psychologists, **James Mark Baldwin**, around the turn of this century (his students included, among others, Jean Piaget). Baldwin, in fact, preceded all of the more famous developmental structuralists, including **Jean Gebser** and **Sri Aurobindo**, and Baldwin has a much more sophisticated model than either of them. This unsung hero is being rehabilitated by those who understand these things. Jean Gebser's structural model, coming 40 years after Baldwin and not nearly as adequate, nonetheless had a spectacular impact, probably precisely because it was so simplistically conceived, a one-line model that is now fairly well-known, and whose major stages are **archaic** to **magic**

to **mythic** to **rational** to **integral-aperspectival**. We will include this model in some later figures.

Interestingly, Baldwin's contemporary William James would give one of the most rigorous treatments of zone 1, or the phenomenology of interior consciousness and its experiences, including the phenomenology of religious experiences (*The Variety of Religious Experiences*). Where James was cementing a modernist approach, Baldwin was seeding a postmodernist approach, creating the structuralism that would drive early postmodernism and, in its wake, later postmodern poststructuralism.

Finally, one of the pioneering forms of this developmental structuralism (or **genealogy**) applied to the collective "we," and especially its linguistically-generated worldviews, was done by **Michel Foucault**, which helped usher in the recent wave of postmodern currents that, in both their healthy and unhealthy (or wildly exaggerated) forms, would dominate the humanities in academia for the last four decades. And where modernist epistemologies were eating away at the Great Traditions from one end (finding them "not scientific"), postmodernist epistemologies were eating away at them from the other (finding them oppressive, marginalizing, patriarchal, monological). There are remedies for both of these, as we will see.

In the meantime, the point is that today, when anybody investigates the **stages of development** of various aspects of an individual's interiors, they are following in the footsteps of these great pioneers, starting with James Mark Baldwin. In the 1950s, there was a renewed interest in this methodology, followed by an explosion of research and a whole new round of pioneering geniuses in developmental studies, including Abraham Maslow, Clare Graves, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Jane Loevinger.[13]

Individual stage investigators continue to use variations on zone-2 in the Upper-Left quadrant, and these include Robert Kegan, Carol Gilligan, Spiral Dynamics (which

purports to cover also LL), Jenny Wade, Basseches, Arlin, Broughton, Fischer, and a host of others….[14]

Notice the immediate relevance for the contemplative and meditative traditions: *these approaches are giving information about aspects of consciousness that are invisible to meditation, centering prayer, or contemplation*. You simply cannot see these stages using introspection, phenomenology, or any of the zone-1 approaches, East or West.

This turns out to be crucially important for the reception of the contemplative traditions in the modern and postmodern world. It has also turned out to be agonizingly important for the alternative colleges and approaches. Any of these zones can have dysfunctions, and if you can't see the zone, you can't see the disease. "Boomeritis" is a dysfunction in some of the zone-2 stages, and it cannot be seen by meditation or phenomenology. Thus the contemplative traditions, which should free you from various chains, simply tighten these chains—which is immediately noticed by the zone-2 researchers. Thus, the practitioners of contemplation today turn out inadvertently to be some of its most effective saboteurs. (See "Boomeritis" below for further discussion.)

Other Outside Approaches to UL

Let me very briefly mention that there have been other outside approaches to interior phenomena besides structuralism and its variants. The most common is perhaps **systems theory**, used most notably by researchers such as Charles Tart. For those interested, I will pursue the role of systems theory in an endnote, and here simply say that, while useful in the Upper Left, systems theory has proven most applicable to the Lower Right, and we will return to systems theory when we survey that quadrant and its contribution to spiritual awareness.[15]

Levels and Lines of Consciousness

Staying with our "objective" or "scientific" or outside view of interiors—the zone-2 view of the UL—one of the first things we notice is, indeed, the whole variety of research pointing to various **developmental lines and their levels**. We then face the thorny issue of how these various developmental lines or "multiple intelligences" are related. This turns out to be especially important in spiritual development, as we will see.

Early developmental theorists tended to assume that there was one thing called development, and they were getting at it. Their stages were simply a map of "the" course of development. Piaget assumed that his cognitive line was the only fundamental line, and everything else hung off it like lights on his Christmas tree. Clare Graves assumed that his "values systems" were actually "levels of existence" into which everything could be plopped (despite the fact that his initial research was conducted on American, white, middle class, college students and consisted in their responses to only one simple question). Still, the early researchers could hardly have assumed otherwise, given the unknown and uncharted nature of the territory they were traversing.

But after 4 decades of this pioneering research, we can put all of their results on the table and have a look, and if we do so, an unmistakable pattern emerges. There is not one line of development that the dozens of models are giving different maps of; rather, there are at least **a dozen different developmental lines**—cognitive, moral, interpersonal, emotional, psychosexual, kinesthetic, self, values, needs, and so on. Each of the great developmentalists tended to stumble onto a particular developmental line or stream and explore it in great detail. They then often assumed that this was the only fundamental stream and all others could easily be reduced to something happening within their stream, an assumption that only history and further research could disclose as unwarranted (we call this **stream** or **line absolutism**).

The idea of multiple developmental lines has become popular with the notion of multiple intelligences—cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence, musical intelligence, kinesthetic intelligence, and so on. Research has continued to confirm that these multiple lines do indeed develop in a **relatively independent** fashion. A person can evidence very high development in some lines (e.g., cognitive), medium development in others (e.g., interpersonal), and low in yet still others (e.g., moral). AQAL introduced the **integral psychograp**h as a representation of these multiple streams and their development (see fig. 5).

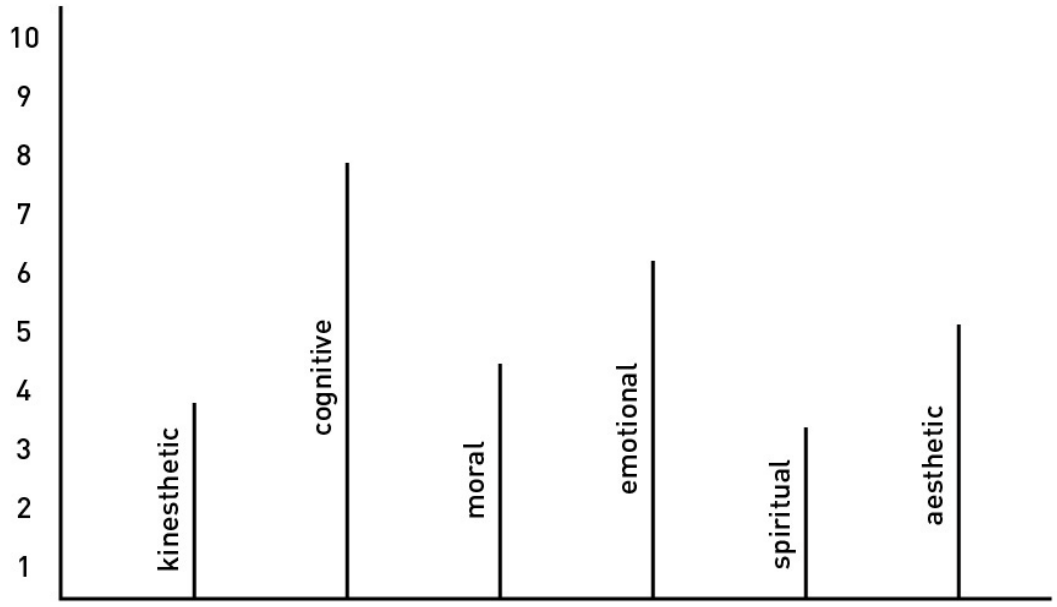

Fig. 5. Integral Psychograph.

What are some of these developmental lines, and what do they mean? It appears that the different lines (or multiple intelligences) are the different types of

answers to the questions that life poses.[16] For example: **What** I am I aware of? (The cognitive line or cognitive intelligence is the response; e.g., Piaget.) Of the things that I am aware of, what do I **need**? (Maslow's needs hierarchy.) Of the things I am aware of, what do I call my "**self**" or "I/me"? (Ego or self development line; e.g. Loevinger.) Of the things that I am aware of, which do I **value** most? (Graves "values systems.") Of the things that I am aware of, how do I **feel** about them? (Emotional intelligence; e.g., Goleman.) Of the things that I am aware of, which are the most attractive or **beautiful**? (Aesthetic line: e.g., Houseman.) Of the things I am aware of, what is the **right** thing do? (Moral intelligence; e.g. Kohlberg.) Of the things I am aware of, what should I do in **relation** to you? (Interpersonal development; e.g., Selman.) Of the things that I am aware of, what holds **ultimate concern**? (Spiritual intelligence—to which we will return shortly.)

Life poses those questions to us. We answer them. The structure and history of those answers is the great purview of genealogy and developmental structuralism. Each of those fundamental questions, precisely because they are presented to us by existence itself, seems to have evolved "organs" in the psyche that specialize in responding to them—multiple intelligences, if you will, devoted to being "smart" about how to answer life's questions.

The great developmentalists simply watched those questions and their answers, noticed the structure of the answers, and **followed those over time**. Doing so (as we saw with Kohlberg) allowed them to see that each of these developmental **lines** possesses **levels** (that unfold in **stages** or **waves**). Even referring to "highly developed" or "poorly developed" implies levels of development, and indeed, each of these developmental lines has been shown to have their own levels of accomplishment (and hence, stages of unfolding)—low to medium to high to very high (with no indication of an

upper limit so far…). A "level of development" is always a "level in a particular line." We noted an example earlier of 3 general stages in the moral line: egocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric.

Line	**Life's Question**	**Typical Researcher**
Cognitive	*What am I aware of?*	Piaget, Kegan
Self	*Who am I?*	Loevinger
Values	*What is significant to me?*	Graves, Spiral Dynamics
Moral	*What should I do?*	Kohlberg
Interpersonal	*How should we interact?*	Selman, Perry
Spiritual	*What is of ultimate concern?*	Fowler
Emotional	*What am I feeling about this?*	Goleman
Aesthetic	*What is attractive to me?*	Houseman
Needs	*What do I need?*	Maslow
Kinesthetic	*How should I physically do this?*	Gardner

Table 1. Developmental Lines, Life's Questions, and Researchers.

Put the results of all of these researchers together—which is something none of them could have done in their early research—and the result is indeed something like the integral psychograph (fig. 5).

The Relation of the Different Lines to Each Other

So, what is the relation of the many developmental lines to each other? This is not nearly as simple a question as it might appear.

To begin with, the levels/stages in one line categorically cannot be used to refer to the levels/stages in another. First, because there is no way to know exactly how they line up, and second, because even if we did, the structures in the different lines are apples and oranges (e.g., the levels in morality are described in terms quite different from those in Gravesian values). This is why you cannot use Spiral Dynamics terms to describe, say, cognition. Somebody can be at formal operational cognition and embrace orange values. But the identical formal operational cognition can embrace not only orange values, but blue values, red values, or purple values. Thus, somebody with formal operational cognition is not wedded to oranges values, so obviously cognition and vMEMEs are not the same thing, which is why technically you cannot speak of orange cognition or blue cognition, etc. Evidence shows that a person, *in the same act and absolutely simultaneously,* can be at one level of cognition, another level of self-sense, and yet another level of morals, which cannot be explained by models like SD that draw primarily on one line.[17]

So the dozen or so different developmental lines are indeed different, as you might expect and as research confirms. But what is so striking is this: place the developmental models and lines next to each other, as in the psychograph, and all the lines seem to be growing in the same direction, which might be described as increasing complexity (to put it in third-person terms) and increasing consciousness (to put it in first-person terms). But what is the actual gradient here? *What is the y-axis in the psychograph*?

In other words, is there **one yardstick** that can be used to measure the height of all the developmental lines? That has been the great puzzle to developmentalists for the last several decades.

There are two theories available that attempt to explain this, and AQAL uses them both. One theory, accepted by most developmentalists, is that the basic yardstick is the cognitive line, because alone of all the lines, there does seem to be a mechanism relating it to the others. Namely, research has continued to demonstrate that growth in the cognitive line is necessary but not sufficient for the growth in the other lines. Thus, you can be highly developed in the cognitive line and poorly developed in the moral line (very smart but not very moral: Nazi doctors), but we don't find the reverse (low IQ, highly moral). This is why you can have formal operational cognition and red values, but *not* preoperational cognition and orange values (something that cannot be explained if SD vMEMEs were the only levels). So in this view, the altitude is the cognitive line, which is necessary but not sufficient for the other lines.[18] The other lines are not within the cognitive, just dependent on it.

A major reason that the cognitive line is necessary but not sufficient for the other lines is that you have to be aware of something in order to act on it, feel it, identify with it, or need it. Cognition delivers the phenomena with which the other lines operate. This is why it can serve as an altitude marker of sorts.

The other theory, which was introduced in *Integral Psychology* (and spelled out at length in the posted excerpts from volume 2) is that the y-axis is **consciousness per se**. Thus, "degree of consciousness" is itself is the altitude: the more consciousness, the higher the altitude (subconscious to self-conscious to superconscious). In this view, all of the developmental lines move through the same altitude gradient—which is the y-axis, or the "height" of any of the lines on the psychograph—so that a level can be said to be

"higher" in any line the greater the degree of consciousness in it. All of the lines can then indeed be aligned in the same psychograph, moving through the same altitude gradient (as well as moving through their own specific structures). The analogy I use here is ten paths up a mountain: the different paths (representing developmental lines) all have very different structures and views, which simply cannot be equated (the view up the north path and the south path are quite different), but there is a real sense in saying that both of the paths are now at 5000 feet, or the south-view path and the east-view path are now at 7000 feet, and so on. The altitude markers themselves (3000 feet, 8000 feet, etc.) are *without content*—they are "empty," just like consciousness per se—but each of the paths can be measured as to its altitude up the mountain. The "feet" or "altitude" means degree of consciousness, which means degree of development.

This happens to fit nicely with the Madhyamaka-Yogachara view of consciousness as emptiness or openness. Consciousness is not anything itself, just the degree of openness or emptiness, the clearing in which the phenomena of the various lines appear (but is not itself a phenomena—it is the space in which phenomena arise).

This view also accepts the previous (and widely held) view of cognition as necessary but not sufficient, because cognition is simply a qualified type of consciousness appearing as an actual developmental line with its own structure and content. As such, the cognitive line is simply one line among other lines (with its altitude also measured by consciousness per se). (There is one more theory, a third contender, that explains altitude, and that is the theory of basic structures. Suffice it to say that it is something of a combination of both of the above. There is no need to pursue this theory in any detail, since its major points don't alter this discussion. Interested readers can follow up the references.)[19]

Since consciousness itself is without specific contents, how can we refer to its degrees? In other words, what shall we call 1000 meters up the mountain, 2000 meters up the mountain, 3000 meters up, and so on? We could *number* them, and often do (using anywhere from 3 to 16 basic levels of consciousness or general development). But this is less than satisfactory, because then different numbers are often used for the same level. Labeling or *naming* them is not the best idea, either, since names carry so many past associations, but we often end up using names anyway (usually by poaching terms from the levels in one line and making them apply to altitude in general, which is a theoretical disaster).

The wisdom traditions hit upon a nice solution, starting with the chakra system about 2000 years ago, which was to use **the colors of the natural rainbow**, and when they did so, they always arranged them in the natural order—red to yellow to orange to green to turquoise to blue to indigo to violet…. The chakras themselves, for example, start at red, move up to yellow, then green, then blue, then purple, then clear light void….

In addition to occasionally using numbers and names, I am going to follow that ancient tradition and simply use the rainbow as the y-axis, representing increasing levels of *development in general*, as "altitude-up-the-mountain." I have then included, as samples of particular developmental lines with their levels, the cognitive line (using a combination of Piaget for the lower and Aurobindo for the higher stages in that line); the Graves values line (using its SD terms/colors); Robert Kegan's orders of consciousness; and the self-identity line most fruitfully elucidated by Jane Loevinger/Susann Cook-Greuter.

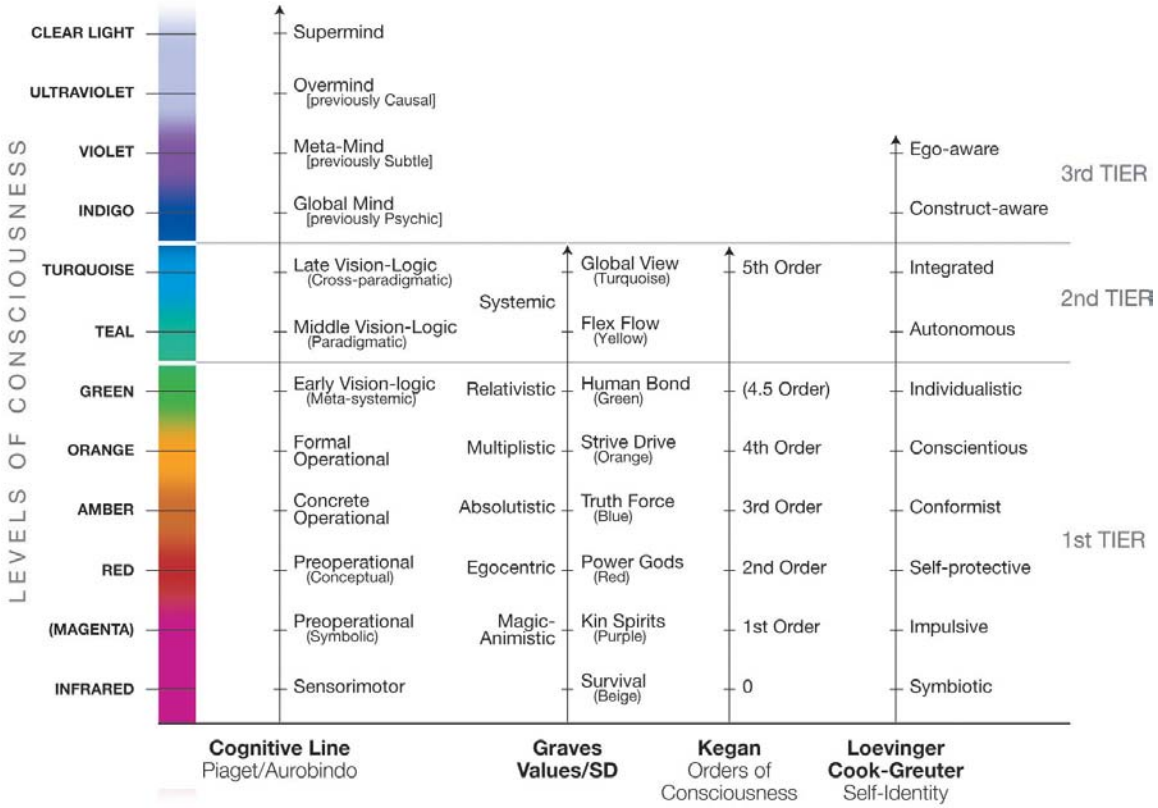

Fig. 6. Some Major Developmental Lines.

The point about this “altitude marker” of development is that indeed, as developmentalists agree, the levels in a particular line cannot be used to refer to the levels in other lines (e.g., as we saw, you cannot speak of “StriveDrive cognition,” as if they had the same structure, since StriveDrive can be embraced by several different levels of cognition). But you can use “altitude” to refer to same general level in all the various lines. We gave the analogy of paths up the mountain: if there are a dozen paths up a mountain, the view from each of the paths is somewhat different, and you cannot use the views or “structures” of any of the particular paths to refer to the views or structures in the other paths. In this aspect, it truly is apples and oranges. The views up

the north side and the south side of the mountain simply cannot be treated identically, not without reductionism (of the line absolutism variety).

Moreover, the research that was used to justify the stage-levels in a particular line (Loevinger, Kohlberg, Graves) most definitely did not include the terms or structures from the other lines, let alone *all* of the other lines in existence (from kinesthetic to musical); hence, the levels in one line cannot be used for the levels in the other lines.[20] But using "altitude" as a general marker of development allows us to refer to general similarities across the various lines. But altitude as "meters" (or inches or yards) itself has no content; it is "empty." Inches is a measure of wood, but nothing in itself. You do not go around saying, "I had to stop building my house today because I ran out of inches." Or, "I better go out and buy some meters." Meters is a measure or a marker of something, but itself is without content.

Likewise with "consciousness" when used in this fashion. It is not a thing or a content or a phenomenon. It has no description. It is not worldviews, values, morals, cognition, vMEMEs, mathematico-logico structures, adaptive intelligence, or multiple intelligence. In particular, it is not itself a line among other lines. It is rather the emptiness, the openness, the clearing in which various phenomena arise, and if those phenomena develop in stages, they constitute a developmental line (cognitive, moral, self, values, needs, memes, etc.). The more phenomena in that line that *can* arise in consciousness, the higher the level in that line. Consciousness itself is not a phenomenon, but the space in which phenomena arise.

Thus, **altitude** or the y-axis is both empty consciousness as such, and then, in manifestation, the cognitive line, which is necessary but not sufficient (and whose altitude itself is measured by empty consciousness as such). Thus, at indicated in figure 6, at *amber altitude*, the cognitive line is at the concrete operational level (conop) (which

is necessary but not sufficient for the other lines), the values line (vMEME) is absolutistic (TruthForce/blue), the self level is conformist, the worldview level is traditional, and so on. At *turquoise altitude*, the cognitive level is mature vision-logic, values (vMEME) is systemic (GlobalView/turquoise), the self-sense is integrated (aka the centaur), the need is self-actualization, and so on. These are all relatively independent developmental lines, because one can be at vision-logic cognition and still have values at TruthForce, etc. (*Integral Psychology* contains tables with over 100 developmental models arrayed against levels in the cognitive line as an altitude marker, and you can consult that if you want.) [21]

Before we leave zone 2, I want to give one more very important developmental line discovered using this methodology, namely, that studied by James Fowler and reported in his influential *Stages of Faith* (and subsequent books). I have included his stages (i.e., **levels in the developmental line of faith**) in figure 7, along with Gebser, Loevinger/Cook-Greuter (for a point of reference), and a representation of *states of consciousness* that we will discuss momentarily.

In regard to Fowler's work, it should be immediately emphasized that there are several different meanings of "faith" or "spirituality," only one of which is being investigated by Fowler. This meaning or aspect of spirituality is both *developmental* and *structural*—it is a classic zone-2 approach, this time applied to questions having to do not with cognitive intelligence nor emotional intelligence, but with **spiritual intelligence**. This particular developmental line is an important aspect of spirituality, and its relation to the other dimensions or aspects of spirituality is something we will return to several times. (For those not familiar with Fowler's research, I will include a short summary of it below.) Henceforth, when I refer to the *stages of spiritual intelligence*, it is specifically in reference to Fowler's research findings.

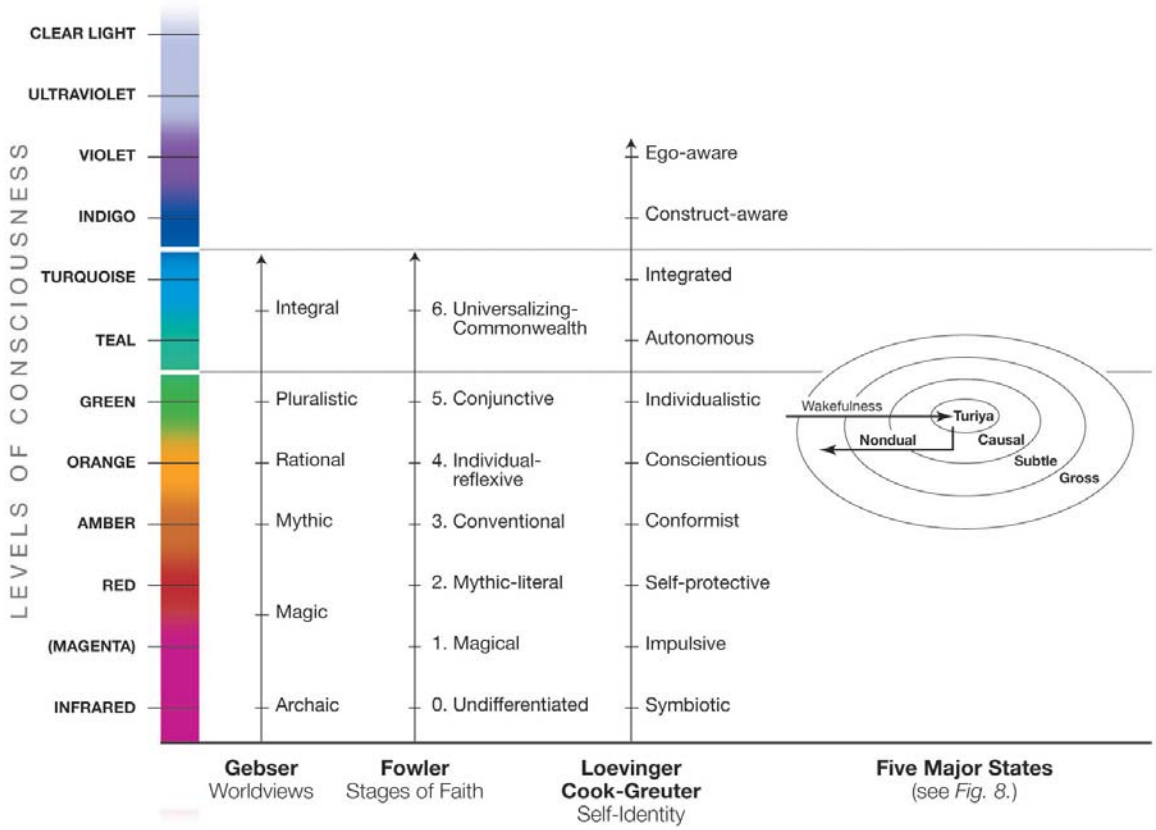

Fig. 7. Gebser, Fowler, Loevinger/Cook-Greuter.

All of the foregoing discussion of “levels and lines” is what interior holons (UL) look like from the outside (zone 2). What do they look like from the inside (zone 1)?

Zone 1: Phenomenology, Experiences, and States of Consciousness

What do interior holons look like from the inside? Whatever you happen to be feeling right now.

But from there, it gets a little more complicated. One of the important distinctions that AQAL highlights is the difference between **structures** and **states**. "Structures," in the most general sense, is basically just another term for the levels in any line (in any quadrant). Each of the levels in a line has a structure or *patterned wholeness*. That patterned wholeness, or stages of them, when viewed from without in an objective fashion, are exactly the "structures" studied by structuralism and developmentalism. Thus, with reference to Loevinger, "conformist," "conscientious," "individualistic," and so on, are some of the major structures (or levels) in the ego line of development.

(These *structure/levels* emerge in *sequential stages*, and so we often use "structures" and "stages" interchangeably, but technically they are different, so for this discussion we will not equate them. Inelegant as it might be, we will refer to **structure-stages** when we mean the sequential unfolding of zone-2 structures in the psyche. Loevinger, Kegan, Selman, Perry, Broughton, etc., are structure-stages.)

In this section, we want to look at **states of consciousness** and compare and contrast them with **structures of consciousness**. Dry as it might initially seem, this relationship turns out to hold perhaps the single most important key to understanding the nature of spiritual experiences (and hence the very role of religion in the modern and postmodern world). With that modest and blushing introduction, let's begin.

We said that zone 1 in the UL (the inside view of an "I") is simply whatever I happen to be thinking, feeling, and sensing right now. I could continue to describe my present, immediate, felt experiences and apprehensions in direct 1st-person terms

("There is a sensation of heaviness, heat, tension, lightness, luminosity, feelings of love, care, exaltation, momentary experiential flashes, etc."), and many forms of phenomenology, by whatever label, do exactly that (fig. 3). Those are all variations on zone-1 approaches, some of which investigate particular types of interior experiences known as **phenomenal states**.

What I experience in an immediate, 1st-person fashion includes, in addition to specific "contents" or "immediate experiences" (a feeling, a thought, an impulse, an image, etc.), what are often called "phenomenal states." Notice that whereas I can experience states, I don't experience structures per se. *I never directly experience* something like "the conscientious structure," even though that might be precisely the stage I am at, with all of my thoughts actually arising within that structure, unbeknownst to me. **Structures** can only be discovered by a zone-2 methodology, which is why you cannot discover them using meditation or contemplation of any variety. **States**, on the other hand, are directly available to awareness, under various circumstances.[22] I experience states, not structures.

Most of us are familiar with states of consciousness, and so are the great wisdom traditions. Vedanta, for example, gives 5 major **natural states** of consciousness: waking, dreaming, deep sleep, Witnessing (*turiya*), and Nondual (*turiyatita*).

In addition to natural or ordinary states, there are **altered** or **nonordinary states**, including **exogenous** states (e.g., drug induced), and **endogenous** states (which includes **trained states** such as **meditative states)**.

Heightened states, ordinary or nonordinary, are often called **peak experiences**.

Most cultures, and certainly the great traditions, have a **cartography of states**, including natural, exogenous, and endogenous states.

Some of the **meditative cartographies** are extraordinarily elaborate, but all of them are based on zone-1 methodologies and injunctions (such as zazen, shamanic voyaging, centering prayer, vipassana, etc.), and can be confirmed as phenomenological experiences by those who wish to undertake the appropriate training.

Whether those *phenomenological experiences* ("I see what feels like infinite light and love") have actual *ontological referents* ("There is a Divine Ground of Being") is, needless to say, an interesting question (which we will return to below, since that is one of the main purviews of Integral Post-Metaphysics). For those interested, the psychedelic cartography of Stan Grof is likewise a zone-1 cartography (which is why you can't find any zone-2 stages in any of his cartographies).

Many of the great traditions have created an elaborate psychology to go with these states, and although the details needn't detain us, let me highlight a few features that are significant. The correlations I am about to summarize are in themselves contentious and difficult to prove. But we will simply assume them for the moment. I will use Vedanta and Vajrayana as an example (although Neoplatonism would do just as well), and we have to start by getting some complicated terminology out of the way.

According to both of them, meditative states are variations on natural states. For example, meditation with form (*savikalpa samadhi*) is a variation on the **dream state**, and meditation without form (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) is a variation on **deep formless sleep**. Further, the 3 major natural states (waking, dreaming, sleeping) are said to be supported by a particular energy or "body" (the **gross body**, the **subtle body**, and the **causal body**, respectively; e.g., Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, Dharmakaya; a fourth body, the Svabhavikakaya, is sometimes said to support the witnessing/nondual states). Although, technically speaking, the terms "gross," "subtle," and "causal" refer only to the bodies or energies (in the UR), we also use those terms to refer to the corresponding

states of consciousness (in the UL). Thus, we can refer to 5 major, natural, and/or meditative states of consciousness as: gross, subtle, causal, witnessing, and nondual states of consciousness. (As the traditions themselves often do, I will sometimes refer to 3, or 4, or 5 major states of consciousness—but all 5 are meant.)

For those of you who stopped trying to understand what I was saying somewhere in the middle of that paragraph, the upshot is simply that, according the great wisdom traditions, all men and women have available to them at least 5 great **states of consciousness**, all of which can be directly experienced:

1. gross-waking states, such as what I might experience riding a bike or reading this page;

2. subtle-dream states, such as I might experience in a vivid dream, or in a vivid "day-dream" or visualization exercise, as well as in certain types of meditation with form;

3. causal-formless states, such as deep dreamless sleep and types of formless meditation and experiences of vast openness or emptiness;

4. witnessing states—or "the Witness"—which is a capacity to witness all of the other states, such as the capacity for unbroken attention in the waking state and the capacity to lucid dream;

5. ever-present Nondual awareness, which is not so much a state as the ever-present ground of all states (and can be "experienced" as such).

Vedanta and Vajrayana maintain that those states (and their corresponding bodies or realms of being) are available to all human beings by virtue of "the precious human body." What this means is **that these major states of being and**

consciousness are available to all humans at virtually any stage of growth, including even an infant, simply because even infants wake, dream, and sleep.

That's a really, really, really important point, which we will come back to.

(As a sneak preview, because the essential contours of these major *states* are ever-present, then you can have a peak experience of a higher state, but not of a higher stage. If you are at Jane Loevinger's conscientious stage of development, for example, research continues to demonstrate that you simply cannot have a peak experience of a higher **structure**, such as the autonomous—but you *can* have a peak experience of a gross, subtle, causal, witnessing, or nondual **state** of consciousness. Exactly how these two fit together is what we will want to return to.)

Although the general contours of these major states of being are available naturally and spontaneously to all humans, some of them can be intensely trained or investigated, and then they hold some surprises, indeed.

Trained States: Meditative and Contemplative States

Even though the major states of being and consciousness are said to be available to all humans, at all stages, this doesn't mean that they can't be further trained and exercised. **State training** is a particularly advanced zone-1 technology brought to staggeringly advanced forms in the great meditative traditions East and West.

Generally speaking, *natural states do not show development*. Dream states occur, but they don't go anywhere. Natural states and most altered states do not show stages. They simply come and they go, as most states do—whether an emotional state or a weather state like a thunder storm. Moreover, most states of consciousness are exclusive—you cannot be drunk and sober at the same time. And natural states persist

even through advanced stages—even Buddhas wake, dream, and sleep (although they Witness them as Nondual).

But some states can be *trained*, and when this involves attention deployment—as many forms of meditation and contemplation do—then *these states tend to unfold in a sequential fashion*, and when they do so, they tend to follow the natural order of gross to subtle to causal to nondual states.

That means that in my *direct, first-person experience*, phenomenal states in many types of meditation are said to unfold from gross phenomena ("I see rocks") to subtle phenomena ("I see light and bliss, I feel expansive love"), to causal phenomena ("There is only vast emptiness, an infinite abyss") to nondual ("Divine Emptiness and relative Form are not two"). These are not third-person structures (seen by zone 2), but first-person states (zone 1).

When states unfold in some sort of sequence, we call them **state-stages** (contrasted to **structure-stages**).

Because states by their very nature are much more amorphous and fluid than structures, this stage sequence is very fluid and flowing—and, further, **you can peak higher states.** (Although typically, without further training, they will be very transitory—merely altered states or temporary peak experiences—but with further training "peak experiences" can be stabilized into so-called "plateau experiences"). Thus, if you are at a particular *state*-stage, you can often temporarily peak experience a higher state-stage, but not stably hold it as a plateau experience.

On the other hand, research repeatedly shows that *structure*-stages are fairly discrete levels or rungs in development; moreover, as research shows time and time again, *you cannot skip structure-stages, nor can you peak higher structure-stages*. (Again, we will return to the relation of states and structures shortly.)

As for these *state*-stages, generally moving from gross experience to subtle experience to causal experience to nondual, you can open virtually any manual of meditation or contemplation, East or West, and you will find a description of meditative

	THE STAGES OF MEDITATION	PERSPECTIVE	
		Buddhism	Yoga
Attitude, Affect Behavior	I. PRELIMINARY ETHICAL PRACTICES A. Generation of Faith; Attitude Change B. Formal Study; Intrapsychic Transformation C. Sensory/Behavioral Regulation Uninterrupted Awareness Training	(photon-like)	mind-as-light (wave-like)
Thinking	II. PRELIMINARY MIND/BODY TRAINING A. Body Awareness Training B. Calming Breathing and Thinking C. Re-arrangement of the Stream of Consciousness	discontinuous momentariness	continuous transformation of same thing
Perception	III. CONCENTRATION WITH SUPPORT A.1. Concentration Training; Decategorizing A.2. Internalization; Rearrangement of Image B. Recognition of Various Patterns of all Sense Modalities from the Seed C. Stopping the Mind, i.e., Gross Perception	discontinuously emanating seed	continuously transforming seed
Self	IV. CONCENTRATION WITHOUT SUPPORT A. Tuning in Subtle Perception B. Recognizing the Subtle Flow C. Collapse of Ordinary Observer; Restructuring of Perspective	discontinuous immediate events Concomitant Perspective (Access)	continuous vibration of *tanmātras* Reflection of *puruṣa (buddhi)*
Time/Space	V. INSIGHT PRACTICE A. High-Speed Search of Subtle Flow; Eradication of Self; Derealization B. High-Speed Search of Gross Mental Events; Shifts in Perceived Duration & Frequency of Events of Subtle Flow: Arising Only; Full Event in Slow Motion; Quick Flashing Psychic Powers; Raptures; White Light C. Analysis of Mind-Moments and Their Succession; The Problem of Perceived Time-Space Interconnectedness of all potential events	emptiness non-entityness (*ngo bo nyid med*) discrete flashes Non-dissolution Co-dependent Origination of All Realms and Times	cessation of sense-impressions sameness (*tulya*) transformation of one substratum (*dharmin*) Unity Unity of Manifest Cosmos (*prākṛti*)
Cosmos	VI. ADVANCED INSIGHT A. Equanimity of Interrelated Events; Interaction of Specific Events B. Stopping all Mental Activity/Reactivity Enlightenment Moments: Basis: Cessation of Mental Content; Vast Awareness Path: Return of Mental Content from Changed Locus of Awareness	Non-dissolution	All Interactions of Manifest Cosmos Raincloud Samādhi

Table 2. Stages of Meditative States in Some Prominent Eastern Traditions.

or spiritual experiences unfolding in essentially that order, with quite specifically those general characteristics. One thinks immediately of St. Teresa's interior castles, the extraordinary cartographies of St. John of the Cross, those of the Church fathers—such as St. Gregory of Nyssa, Origen, St. Dionysius (whose "way of purification," "way of illumination," and "way of unification" is as short and succinct a summary as you will find—purify the gross body via discipline and still the gross mind via concentration; find subtle interior illumination; surrender even illumination in a prayer of quietude and divine ignorance; thereby the soul and God find union in Godhead, one with the radiant All).

Perhaps the most sophisticated and careful study of any of the meditative traditions was that done by Daniel P. Brown (reported in Wilber, Engler, Brown, et al., *Transformations of Consciousness –Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development*; 1986; reissue 2006). Brown conducted an extensive study of the root texts and the central commentaries in three major meditative traditions—the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali, the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa, and the *Mahamudra Nges don…zla zer* of Bkra shis rnam rgyal. These are, in a sense, the very pillars of both Hinduism and Buddhism.

Brown found that the meditative path in all of them traversed the same basic contemplative stages, which were all variations on gross preliminaries and training, then subtle experiences of light and luminosity, then variations on formless absorption or causal black-near attainment, then breakthrough into nondual realization (and then possible further "post-enlightenment" refinements). The meticulous care and research, including reading the texts in their original languages, has made Brown's study an enduring classic in meditative stages. (See Table 2 for his short summary.)

In *Transformations of Consciousness*, coedited with Brown and Engler, we asked Harvard theologian John Chirban if we could carry a report of his own extensive work on

the stages of contemplative states in the early Church fathers, which we did. It showed the same essential stages, gross phenomena to subtle light to causal darkness and nondual union.[23] (See Table 3 for his summary.)

Again, because these are *state*-stages, not structure-stages, there can be much fluidity, temporary skipping around, peak experiencing of higher states (not structures), and so on. But the general progression of states as they are mastered was indeed gross to subtle to causal to nondual.

APOPHATIC APPROACHES

STAGES	St. Isaac the Syrian	St. Seraphim of Sarov	St. Gregory Palamas	St. John Climacos	St. Maximos	St. Dionysios
V THEOSIS	(3) Perfection	Acquisition of the Holy Spirit	(3) Theosis	Step 30 Likening	(3) Ἀεί Εἶναι Eternal Being	(3) Unification Prayer of Union
		Kingdom Righteousness Peace		29		(Prayer of Quiet)
IV LIGHT		Illumination	(2) Divine Light Pure Hesychasm	Steps 28 27 Hesychasm		(2) Illumination
						(Prayer of Recollection)
III APATHEIA	(2) Purification					(1) Purification
				Spiritual Development		(Prayer of Mind)
II METANOIA	(1) Repentance		(1) Prayer Labor	(1) Steps 1–26	(2) Εὖ Εἶναι (Well-Being)	
		Prayer Fasting Almsgiving				(Prayer of Simplicity)
I IMAGE					(1) Εἶναι (being)	

Table 3. Stages of Contemplative States in Some Prominent Church Saints.

States are pictorially hard to depict; we'll settle for cloud-like spheres. Figure 8 is a summary of the typical progression of meditative states over a full course of meditative training, which may take anywhere from 5 to 20 years to master. What we see is a progression of Wakefulness from gross to subtle to causal to nondual—a progression of Wakefulness from its typical confinement in the waking state, to a Wakefulness that persists into the dream state (at which point, lucid dreaming is common) and/or intermediate meditative states, and then into the causal formless state (by whatever name), at which point states of advanced meditation, including cessation, are possible, and/or a very tacit awareness extending into the deep sleep state, so that a Wakefulness is experienced even in deep dreamless sleep (there is EEG confirmation of patterns in very advanced meditators consistent with this claim). At that point, all subjective states have been made object of the Witnessing presence, at which point Nondual union or even identity with a prior Ground is often reported. Exactly what a "divine Ground" means… well, you know exactly what it means, but we will return and discuss this awakening in light of integral interpretations.

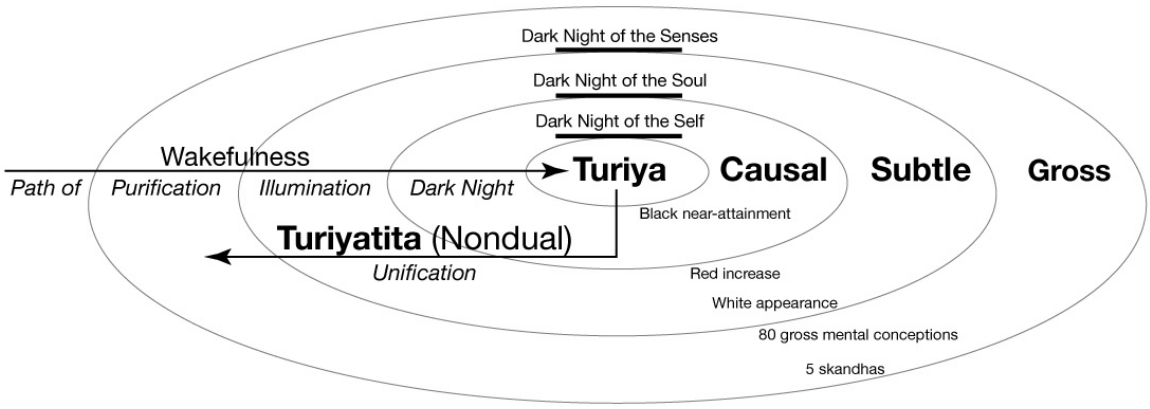

Fig. 8. Major Stages of Meditative States.

We have examined structures and states of consciousness. The 64 thousand dollar question is, how are they related? They are, respectively, perhaps the quintessential contributions of the **contemplative approaches** to the UL (zone-1 meditation and contemplation) and the **conventional approaches** to the UL (zone-2 structuralism and genealogy). And this brings us back, indeed, to our original question: why can you sit on your meditation mat for decades and never see anything resembling the stages of Spiral Dynamics? And why can you study Spiral Dynamics till the cows come home and never get satori?

Zones 1 and 2: Zen and Spiral Dynamics

One of the things I will try do throughout this essay is give very brief overviews of well-known and well-respected methodologies, then suggest how they can fruitfully be integrated with an AQAL approach, something that needs to be done in any event if "integral spirituality" is to have any meaning. We start with Zen and Spiral Dynamics, and the aforementioned question.

Spiral Dynamics is based on the work of Clare Graves, one of the great pioneers of zone-2 developmental studies. His model is based on research originally done with college students presented with one question: "Describe the behavior of a psychologically healthy human organism." Following a standard zone-2 methodology as old as Baldwin, Graves found responses to his question that eventually led him to formulate a system of development of what he and his students called levels in a "**values system**." Spiral Dynamics, based on Graves's work, refers to a "vMEME," defined as "a systems or **values meme**," and also as "a core intelligence" (which we simply call the values line or values intelligence). Graves and SD speak of 8

levels/stages of this adaptive intelligence, which briefly are (all following terms are directly from *Spiral Dynamics*):

Level 1 (A-N)—*Survivalistic*; staying alive; "SurvivalSense"

Level 2 (B-O)—*Magical*; safety and security; "KinSpirits"

Level 3 (C-P)—*Impulsive*; egocentric; power and action; "PowerGods"

Level 4 (D-Q)—*Purposeful*; absolutistic; stability and purposeful life; "TruthForce"

Level 5 (E-R)—*Achievist*; multiplistic; success and autonomy; "StriveDrive"

Level 6 (F-S)—*Communitarian*; relativistic; harmony and equality; "HumanBond"

Level 7 (G-T)—*Integrative*; systemic; "FlexFlow"

Level 8 (H-U)—*Holistic*; experiential; synthesis and renewal; "GlobalView"

Many people using Spiral Dynamics have difficulty understanding the essential nature of the knowledge that this system represents within a larger AQAL framework, so let me suggest this thought experiment and see if it helps:

Let's say you take a course in Spiral Dynamics at a university. Let's say you are developmentally at Level 4, Purposeful. You read the textbook, you memorize the descriptions of the 8 levels or 8 vMEMES, you discuss them with the teacher and the class. You take the final exam, and it asks you to describe the 8 levels of values systems, and you do so perfectly. You get a perfect 100 on the exam.

The reason that you can describe Levels 5, 6, 7, and 8—*even though you are only at Level 4 yourself*—is that these are exterior or zone-2 descriptions. They are the 3rd-person descriptions of various 1st-person realities. You can get a perfect 100 on the exam because you can memorize these 3rd-person descriptions, even though you

yourself are not at the higher levels whose descriptions you have memorized. And there are plenty of people now talking about turquoise values who are at green, and so on.

Now imagine a different exam. This one says: "Please describe Level-8 experience as it is directly felt now, in immediate, 1st-person language," and this includes an oral exam with the same requirements. If your self-sense is truly at Level 4, you will thoroughly flunk this exam. You can pass the 3rd-person exam, but you flunk the 1st-person exam.

In other words, studying the stages of SD can give you the outside (or 3rd-person) view of these stages, but cannot transform you to any stages higher than you are already at. This is not a fault of the system, this is exactly what zone-2 descriptions are—namely, 3rd-person descriptions and structural formulations of 1st-person realities.

This is why studying Spiral Dynamics for years will not necessarily transform you. It engages 3rd-person cognition, not 1st-person self-identity. Again, this is NOT a fault of the model, it is EXACTLY what zone-2 approaches do (or 3rdperson approaches to 1st-person realities). I am a huge fan of the work of Clare Graves, and the wonderfully accessible way that Spiral Dynamics, developed by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan, presents it. I continue to recommend SD as the best simple introductory model. And Don, of course, is a founding member of Integral Institute and a longtime friend; and Chris Cowan and Natasha Todorovic have done a wonderful job of making much of the original Graves work available to a larger audience.

As for transformation itself: How and why individuals grow, develop, and transform is one of the great mysteries of human psychology. The truth is, nobody knows. There are lots of theories, lots of educated guesses, but few real explanations. Needless to say, this is an extraordinarily complex subject, which I will set aside for the moment and finish this section.

So let's say that whatever zone-2 level you are at, you decide to take up meditation. This is a 1st-person adventure, not a 3rd-person study. If you successfully take up any serious form of contemplation or meditation, you will begin to have a series of experiences. Because these are meditative experiences and states, they are not the fairly rigid structural-stages of most zone-2 approaches. But they will tend to unfold in general waves of awareness, gross to subtle to causal to nondual—the major state-stages as in tables 2 and 3.

In Zen, the most famous version of these meditative stages is the **Ten Ox-Herding pictures**. These are state-stages that depict both the overall course of Zen training and also the moment-to-moment unfolding of any point of training. In one sense, as previously noted, they are stages in attention deployment and training, pushing Wakefulness from its typical confinement in the gross-waking state, and into a Wakefulness of subtle-dream phenomena (savikalpa, deity, illumination) and causal phenomena (nirvikalpa, formless, dark night)—by this point, we are at the 8th ox-herding picture of an empty circle—and then ever-present nondual Big Mind/Big Heart (sahaj, Godhead, unity)—the 10th picture of "entering the marketplace with open hands."

As noted, these are general variations on the same zone-1 state-stages reported by Daniel P. Brown. Daniel Goleman has given a more general view of these state-stages in his *Varieties of Meditative Experience* (a book intentionally named after William James's great *Varieties of Religious Experience*, reflecting, I believe, Goleman's intuitive grasp that both of those books reflect the same zone-1 methodology—namely, phenomenology in the broad sense).

Now, the sixty-four thousand dollar question: how are the Zen stages and the Spiral Dynamics stages related?

The W-C Lattice

At this point I am going to drag y'all through the convoluted mess that we had to go through in order to arrive at some sort of clarity on this issue. I'm going to do this because I had to slug through this rotten mess and I don't see any reason you shouldn't.

What was so confusing to us early researchers in this area is that we knew the stage conceptions of people like Loevinger and Graves were really important; moreover, some of these stages (e.g., Kohlberg) had been tested in a dozen or more cross-cultural studies; you either included these models or you had a painfully incomplete psychospiritual system.

But we knew that equally important were the phenomenological traditions East and West (e.g., St. Teresa's *Interior Castle*, Anu and Ati Yoga), as well as the recent studies like Daniel P. Brown's on the commonality of certain deep features in meditative stages. And so typically what we did was simply take the highest stage in Western psychological models—which was usually somewhere around SD's GlobalView, or Loevinger's integrated, or the centaur—and then take the 3 or 4 major stages of meditation (gross, subtle, causal, nondual—purification, illumination, unification), and stack those stages *on top* of the other stages. Thus you would go from Loevinger's integrated level (centaur) to psychic level to subtle level to causal level to nondual level. Bam bam bam bam…. East and West integrated!

It was a start—at least some people were taking both Western and Eastern approaches seriously—but problems immediately arose. Do you really have to progress through all of Loevinger's stages to have a spiritual experience? If you have an illumination experience as described by St. John, does that mean you have passed through all 8 Graves value levels? Doesn't sound quite right.

A second problem quickly compounded that one. If "enlightenment" (or any sort of *unio mystica*) really meant going through all of those stages, then how could somebody 2000 years ago be enlightened, since some of the stages, like systemic GlobalView, are recent emergents? These early attempts at integration were stalling around this issue of how to relate the meditative stages and the Western developmental stages, and there it sat stalled for about two decades.

Part of the problem centered around: what is "enlightenment," anyway? In an evolving world, what did "enlightenment" mean? What *could* "enlightenment" mean?—and be defined in a way that would satisfy all the evidence, both from those claiming it and those studying it? Any definition of "enlightenment" would have to explain what it meant to be enlightened today but also explain how the same definition could meaningfully be operative in earlier eras, at least to some degree.

The test case became: in whatever way that we define enlightenment today, can somebody 2000 years ago—say, Buddha or Christ Jesus or Padmasambhava—still be said to be "enlightened" or "fully realized" by any meaningful definition?

This complex of problems formed something of a Gordian knot for, as I said, the better part of two decades. The first real break came in understanding the difference between states and structures, and then how they might be related (once you figured out that you had to stop equating them). A few years after I introduced a suggested solution, my friend Allan Combs, working independently, hit upon an essentially similar idea, and so, in a painfully transparent bid for history, we named this the "Wilber-Combs Lattice" (after months of me having to explain to Allan how silly the "Combs-Wilber Lattice" sounded).

Here is the general idea. The essential key is to begin by realizing that because most meditative *states* are variations on the natural states of gross-waking, subtle-

dreaming, and causal-formlessness, then they are present, or can be present, at virtually all *stages* of growth, because even the lowest stages wake, dream, and sleep. If you take any structure-stage sequence (we will use Gebser's—archaic, magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, integral) and put those sequentially developing *stages* running up the left side of the grid or lattice, and then put the major *states* across the top, you get a

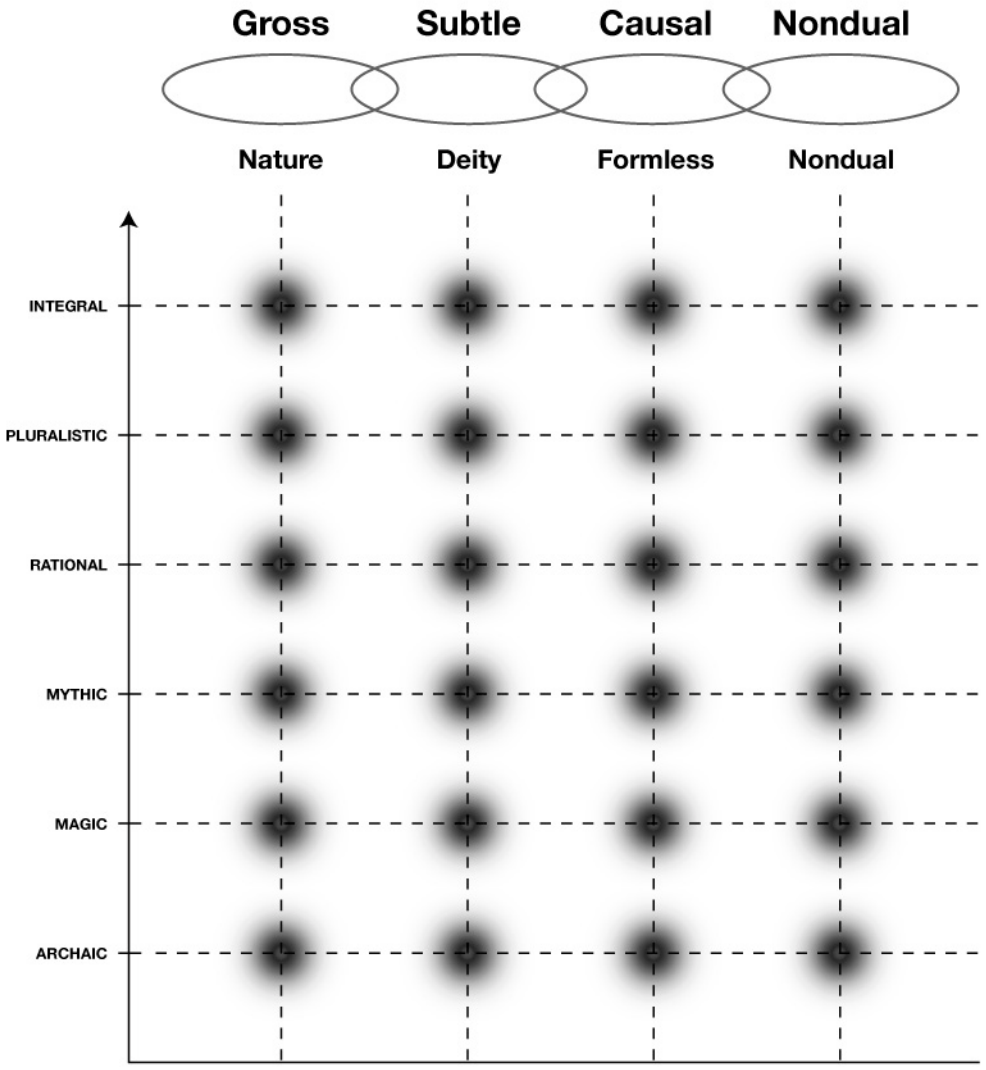

Fig. 9. The Wilber-Combs Lattice.

simple version of the W-C Lattice (see fig. 9).[24] There are many variations on this general idea, and I do not want to imply that Allan agrees with all of mine; but the general idea that structures and states overlap in complex ways is the indeed the point. Most of these diagrams and the following discussion are my particular take on that general notion.

What you can see in figure 9 is that a person at any stage (and henceforth, when I say "stage," I mean "structure-stage")—that any person at any *stage* can have a peak experience of a gross, subtle, causal, or nondual *state*. **But a person will interpret that state according to the stage they are at**. If we are using Gebser's simple model of 6 stages, then we have 6 stages X 4 states = 24 structure-state experiences (and, as we'll see, we have evidence for all of them).

That bold sentence was for us early researchers the breakthrough and real turning point. It allowed us to see how individuals at even some of the lower stages of development—such as magic or mythic—could still have profound religious, spiritual, and meditative state experiences. Gross/psychic, subtle, causal, and nondual were no longer stages *stacked on top* of the Western conventional stages, but were states (including altered states and peak experiences) that can and did occur *alongside* any of them. This is suggested in fig. 7 by placing the 3 state/clouds to the right of the stages. (What was so doubly confusing at the start is that, as indicated on fig. 6, there are also 3 or 4 higher *structures/levels* beyond the centaur, and they have similar sounding characteristics as these higher states, which made it very difficult to spot the differences.)[25]

The point is that a person can have a profound peak, religions, spiritual, or meditative experience of, say, a subtle light or causal emptiness, but they will interpret

that experience with the only equipment they have, namely, the tools of the stage of development they are at.

But the states themselves are available more or less from the start, because everybody wakes, dreams, and sleeps, no matter what stage they are at.

Let me give one simple series to show what is involved. Take a subtle-state experience of intense interior luminosity accompanied by a sense of universal love. Let's say this person is Western and Christian, so that the Lower-Left quadrant (which is also intimately involved in providing the contexts for interpretation)[26] has primed this experience of interior luminosity to be interpreted as an encounter with Jesus Christ (or the Holy Spirit). That subtle-realm religious experience *can occur at virtually any stage*—the magic, mythic, rational, pluralistic, or integral—but in each case, it will be *interpreted* according the basic limiting principles of that stage.

Thus (to give some quick and stylized examples), at the **magic** stage, Jesus is experienced as a personal savior who can magically alter the world in order to satisfy my every desire and whim. Jesus as Magician, turning water in wine, loaves into fishes, waking on water (we are not talking about the ontological content, if any, of the interpretation; Jesus may or may not have walked on water, but at this stage, this is the thing that would mean the most to me). This stage is preconventional and egocentric, so this Jesus cares only about me. At the next stage, the **mythic**, the same kind of subtle-state experience might be interpreted as communion with Jesus the Eternal Truth bringer. This stage is *absolutistic* in its beliefs, so you will either believe the Word exactly as written, or you will burn in hell forever. This stage is also *ethnocentric*, so *only* those who believe in Jesus Christ as their personal savior can be saved. At the next stage, the **mental-rational**, Jesus Christ becomes a humanized figure, still fully Divine and fully human, but now fully human in a more believable way, as a teacher of the

universal love of a Deistic God (who has read *Principia Mathematica* and knows where to drawn the line). Because this stage is the beginning of the postconventional and *worldcentric* stages, this is also the first of the stages of development that can find salvation through Christ Jesus but also allow that others might find equal salvation through a different path. Have a series of profound spiritual experiences at the **pluralistic stage** and you will likely find yourself one of the authors of the *Postmodern Bible*, a wonderful example—out of thousands that have sprung up—of interpreting Jesus Christ and the Christ experience through the lens of the green stage of development. The **integral stage** for Gebser was one stage, but for us is simply the opening to at least four higher structure-stages of development, but any one of them will insist on integrating its experience of Christ-consciousness with other expressions of the Holy Spirit around the world, and if so in your case, you might likely find yourself at a conference like this.

Notice in figure 9 I have written *nature*, *deity*, *formless*, and *nondual mysticism* under their respective states. These are very loose assignations, but nonetheless quite useful (something I have added to the original W-C lattice). The basic idea is that in each of the 4 major natural states, you can have a peak experience or intensification of that state. One of the ultimate peak experiences in any realm is to be *one with* the phenomena in that realm. To experience a oneness with all phenomena in the gross-waking state is a typical **nature mysticism**. To experience a oneness with all phenomena in the subtle-dream state is a typical **deity mysticism**. To experience a oneness with all phenomena (or lack thereof) in the causal-unmanifest state is a typical **formless mysticism**. To experience a oneness with all phenomena arising in gross, subtle and causal states is a typical **nondual mysticism**.

That is one suggested explanatory classification that I believe is quite valid. If we add that to the W-C Lattice, it helps us see that individuals might have an experience of oneness with nature—and hence be "nature mystics"—but they will interpret that oneness quite differently depending on the stage they are at. You can have a profound experience of oneness with nature and still be a red level, a blue level, an orange level, and so on (and you might be at turquoise level, a violet level, or an ultra-violet level). This becomes quite important, I believe, in watching how various nondual paths, East and West, have been interpreted in America in the last three decades, particularly with postmodernist currents (and their downsides, "boomeritis").

But quite apart from all of that, and quite apart from whether or not we can correlate those four major types of mysticism with those four states, the general contours of the W-C Lattice remains quite useful and valid, I believe. It gives us the first way of relating the stages of developmental psychology with the stages of spiritual/meditative states.

The Sliding Scale of Enlightenment

Now the hard part of the Gordian knot. The problem can be stated in several different ways.

--if evolution occurs, how can enlightenment have any meaning? Enlightenment is supposed to mean something like being one with *everything*, but if *everything is evolving*, and I get enlightened today, then won't my enlightenment be partial when tomorrow arrives? Do I become unenlightened with the sun's dawn? Is there any definition of enlightenment today that will not rob me of it tomorrow?

--a typical response is to say that enlightenment is being one with that which is *Timeless* and *Eternal* and *Unborn*, but all that does is create a massive duality in Spirit—

the timeless and eternal versus the temporal and evolving—and so what I am really saying is that enlightenment is being one with half of Spirit.

--we saw that a "nondual mysticism" was a "union with *everything* in the gross, subtle, and causal realms." But you can have a nondual state experience at virtually any stage, including magic and mythic, and, e.g., the mythic world does NOT contain phenomena from the higher stages. So you can have a realization of nondual ever-present awareness that is a pure unity experience with everything, but that experience leaves out a great deal of the universe. Thus satori can actually be unity with a fragmented world. Generally speaking, this is not good.

This is the part of the relation of states and stages that has proven the most difficult, and the solution I have suggested is also rather intricate. But every spiritual teacher I have discussed this proposed solution with agrees that it works, or at least is plausible. Since I don't want to inflict this on any unsuspecting souls, I will reserve it for an appendix ("The Need for Post-Metaphysics"), and we will pick up the discussion with some more examples of zone-1 stages and zone-2 stages, which can be followed without any reference to the Appendix.

Zones 1 and 2: Evelyn Underhill and James Fowler

As another zone 1 and 2 comparison, take perhaps two of the most famous and influential of all spiritual maps, that of Evelyn Underhill and James Fowler. They are almost perfect representatives not only of zones 1 and 2, but of developmental approaches to zones 1 and 2.

Underhill's work is so highly regarded because it is a survey and summary of the stages of the spiritual path based on a study of some of the world's most highly revered

saints and sages. Conducted at the turn of the century, it has stood the test of time because it draws on material that doesn't date easily. In fact, it is essentially quite similar to the first great Western version presented by Dionysius, and down to today with things like Daniel P. Brown's survey of the great Eastern paths. Underhill was a contemporary of William James, and they were both mining the zone-1 approaches to empiricism from within. James conducted primarily a phenomenological description and classification of zone-1 religious experiences, while Underhill conducted a developmental study of zone-1 trained meditative-state experiences. Underhill focused particularly on **the phenomenological stages of the spiritual path**—in other words, *state*-stages—or the stages of felt experiences and *conscious events in the "I" space*, as apprehended and seen from within, as it unfolds over time under the discipline of spiritual practice (or *meditative states training*). These are things that you can see from your meditation mat over time.

Fowler studied those things that you cannot see, no matter how long you sit on your mat. In other words, he is taking a zone-2 approach to unfolding spiritual awareness, which yields phenomena that can only be seen from without, in an objective stance, usually in large groups of people over long stretches of time.

Briefly, Underhill's stages of spiritual development are:

1. initiation
2. purification, pacification
3. illumination
4. dark night
5. unification

Fowler's are:

0. preverbal predifferentiated
1. projective-magical
2. mythic-literal
3. conventional
4. individual reflexive
5. conjunctive, beginning postconventional
6. postconventional commonwealth

Now it has long been recognized that both of them are onto something incredibly important, but their stages don't match up. Moreover, various scholars have commented that they seem to actually overlap in a way disallowed by each of them.

So what's going on here? Underhill is presenting the data from figure 8 (state-stages), and Fowler, from figure 6 (structure-stages). By now, their respective sequences of stages are so familiar, so obvious, they simply jump out at you: Underhill's is a version of gross, subtle, and causal, and Fowler's is a version of preconventional, conventional, and postconventional.

Moreover, put those together and you have a grid of 9 types (the W-C Lattice), and all 9 of those types are abundantly in evidence. (Using Underhill's and Fowler's actual stages, you have around 4 x 6 cells.) Underhill is presenting the sequence of *states* across the top of the Wilber-Combs Lattice (fig. 9), while Fowler is presenting the sequence of vertical *structures* up the left hand column. And that is precisely why somebody at *any* of Fowler's stages can experience *all* of Underhill's states. (And, of course, their relationship is identical to that of Zen and Spiral Dynamics.)

To clarify this, you can simply imagine a W-C Lattice using Fowler and Underhill. Somebody at, for example, Fowler's stage 3—the conventional stage—can take up meditation practice or contemplative prayer, and proceed to delve into illumination, dark night, and unification *states*, but they will interpret each of those experiences in according to their *stage* (in this case, conventional and conformist). Anybody familiar with the monastic traditions, East and West, from Zen to Benedictine, will recognize those souls who might be quite spiritually advanced in Underhill's sense (very advanced in contemplative illumination and unification) and yet might still have a very conformist and conventional mentality—sometimes shockingly xenophobic and ethnocentric—and this goes, unfortunately, for many Tibetan and Japanese meditation masters. Very advanced in meditative *states* training, their *structures* are amber-to-orange, and thus their available interpretive repertoire is loaded by the Lower-Left quadrant with very ethnocentric and parochial ideas that pass for timeless Buddha-dharma.

(E.g., the Dalai Lama believes homosexuality is a sin, anal sex is a sin, oral sex is bad karma, etc.—when everybody knows that oral sex is not bad karma, only bad oral sex is bad karma…. But these are appallingly typical mythic-amber beliefs.)

Not that Westerners necessarily fare any better: the typical Western teacher has a structure that houses its own dysfunction commonly known as "boomeritis" or "pluralitis," which is green pluralism opened to rampant red narcissism (the "me" generation). Because these structure-stages (amber, orange, green, turquoise, etc.) **cannot be seen with any amount of meditation**, they are invisible pathologies lodged in the heart of Buddha-dharma in the West.

(American Buddhist teachers just shake their heads at mention of this, and recommend more meditation, which further intensifies the problem in most cases. We will return to this unfortunate scenario later. In the meantime, Asian meditation teachers,

with a LL-quadrant that is heavily amber, or mythic-membership, and hence "non-egoic" in the sense of PRE-individualistic, and therefore used to having students simply obey them unhesitatingly and in a conformist-stage fashion, don't quite know what to do with individualistic-stage Westerners, whose LL-quadrant is loaded at orange-to-green. Herein lies a four-decade tale of quadrant-clash—but more than that, of **AQAL clash**. At Integral Institute, we are preparing overviews of this AQAL clash, not with a view to blame but a view to begin integral spiritual practice with as little hidden dysfunction as possible.)

On the other side of the grid, you can have somebody quite advanced in Fowler's scheme but not very advanced in Underhill's contemplative scheme. This is not a case of "levels and lines," but of different, relatively independent elements in the AQAL matrix. Mapping the overlap of two of those elements (states and levels/stages) is the W-C Lattice—but, of course, you can map other overlaps in the AQAL matrix as well, and all of them are telling.

On figure 8, I have written in three "dark nights": the dark night of the (gross) senses, the dark night of the (subtle) soul, and the dark night of the (causal) self. A "dark night" is a general term representing many things in different traditions, but in general it represents a passing through of attachment or addiction to a particular realm (gross, subtle, causal), and/or sometimes the pain that comes from peak experiencing a higher state that is already free of the particular addiction, and then being plunged back into the lower state, generating a profound sense of loss and pain. Generally these dark nights occur in transition or the passing of Wakefulness (and hence identity) from gross-body waking to subtle-soul dreaming to causal-self formless to nondual. (That is, dark nights tend to appear at the boundary between those general states as attachment or identity is broken to those states and their general realms of being and knowing. The

states themselves remain and continue to arise, but identity to them is stripped, and that "stripping" constitutes the respective dark nights of senses, soul, and self. The causal/self dark night appears, e.g., as 8th Zen Ox-herding picture, Teresa's 7th castle, Anu Yoga's "black near-attainment," and so on.)

Again, because these are state-stages, not structure-stages, they are very fluid and open, not rigid and linear. Further, they are experienced and interpreted according to the AQAL matrix of the individual (and the lineage) experiencing them. Some traditions emphasize them, others pass over them more quickly. And some, it must be said, go further than others in the general state progression. This is a delicate and difficult issue, but many traditions push through the dark night of the soul (into causal oneness) but not the dark night of the self (into nondual suchness). Some, such as Teresa's 7th castle, take you right into causal emptiness and either leave you there, or leave you in silence as to what lies further. Others, like of course Eckhart, push through the dark night of the self, which totally uproots the subject/object duality and self-contraction in any form (including its causal remnants). The point, however, is simply that however far they push in the overall sequence, the sequence is what it is; and figure 7 is a simple composite summary of that overall sequence, or the overall stages of meditative/contemplative states.

As for Fowler's structure-stages, notice that Fowler is presenting the objective study of the responses of only a few studies, and hence his data thins out at the top very quickly. It's not that there aren't any stages up there, but that there aren't many people up there. If Fowler continued to refine his research with those higher structure-stages in mind (as Susann Cook-Greuter has done on the Loevinger line), we would expect such research to reveal that, at this time, there are somewhere around 3 or 4 *stages of faith* beyond his stage 6 (which is roughly a **turquoise-level faith**), so we would expect to

find, being laid down now only thinly as Kosmic habits but still discernible (though less so the higher you go up the altitude of a mountain being co-created by its climbers), some version of **indigo faith** (at the same altitude as the global-mind), then **violet faith** (meta-mind), then **ultraviolet faith** (overmind)…, as faith itself becomes Fuller and Fuller and Fuller…, grounded in a Freedom and an Emptiness that never changes, that is timeless and eternal, the great Ground and Openness of the entire evolving display.

Four Meanings of the World "Spiritual"

This is the last major topic I would like to address, and it can be done fairly quickly by virtue of the terms we have already covered.

If you analyze the way that people use the world "spiritual"—both scholars and laypeople alike—you will find at least 4 major meanings that people give to that word. Although individuals themselves do not use these technical terms, it is apparent that "spiritual" can mean: the highest levels in any of the lines; a separate line itself; an extraordinary peak experience or state; an attitude. Briefly:

1. If you take any developmental line—cognitive to affective/emotional to needs to values—people do not usually think of the lower or middle levels in those lines as spiritual, but they do describe the higher and highest levels as spiritual (you can look at any of the developmental lines in figs. 6 and 7 and see this). The word "transpersonal," as another example, was adopted with that usage in mind: spiritual is not usually thought of as pre-rational or prepersonal, and it is not personal or rational, it is profoundly trans-rational and transpersonal—it is *the highest levels in any of the lines*. (We often use **Third Tier** as a very loose term to describe these developmental aspects of transpersonal *structure*-stages. See fig. 6.)

2. Sometimes people speak of something like “spiritual intelligence,” which is available not only at the highest levels in any of the lines, but is *its own developmental line*. James Fowler is an example of this. As you can see in figure 7, in this usage, “spiritual” is not something that refers only to the highest, transpersonal, and transrational levels in the various lines (which is usage #1), but is something that has its own first, second, and third tiers (or structure stages), and these stages reach all the way down (like Fowler’s stage 0). Put similarly, this spiritual line has its own prepersonal, personal, and transpersonal levels/stages. This is one of the reasons you have to really follow usage closely, because juxtaposing usage #2 and #1, we would say that only the highest levels of the spiritual line are spiritual. This, needless to say, has caused enormous confusion. (The AQAL position is that both usages—actually, all 4 usages—are correct, you just have to specify which or you get endlessly lost.)

3. Sometimes people speak of spirituality in the sense of a religious experience, meditative experience, or peak experience (which may, or may not, involve stages). William James, Daniel P. Brown, Evelyn Underhill, and Daniel Goleman are examples. This is another important usage, and is, of course, the horizontal line in the W-C Lattice.

4. Sometimes people simply speak of “spiritual” as involving an *attitude* that can be present at *any* stage or state: perhaps love, or compassion, or wisdom. This is a very common usage, but in fine detail, it usually reverts to one of the first three usages, because there are actually stages of love, compassion, and wisdom; but we always list it separately just in case.

I won’t elaborate further on those 4 meanings. They are pursued at length in *Integral Psychology*. My point is simply that all 4 of those are valid meanings of the world “spiritual,” but people usually mush them all together in their discussions, and the result is… well, more mush.

Speaking of usage #4, I've got a pretty bad attitude on this myself, so forgive a 15-second rant. You can take virtually 97% of the discussions of "the relation of science and religion" and put them in the mush category. These discussions never get very far because the definitions that the discussants are using contain these 4 hidden variables, and the variables keep sliding all over the place without anybody being able to figure out why, and the discussions slide with them.

Especially when you realize that usage #3 contains levels of religion or **levels of spirituality**, at which point things spin totally out of control. Somebody says, "Religion or spirituality tells us about deep connections and eternal values," and I have no bloody idea which religion or spirituality they mean, and all I'm sure is, they don't either. There are at least 5 or 6 major levels of religion—from magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral and higher—across 4 classes (nature, deity, formless, nondual), not to mention four meanings.

This is NOT an overly complicated scheme. It is the MINIMAL scheme you need to be able to say anything coherent on the topic.

Boomeritis

Boomeritis is important in itself, but it is indicative of a much broader and more important issue, namely, stream or line pathology (or developmental-line dysfunction, DLD).

Any aspect of the psyche—or of reality, for that matter—can become dysfunctional. I can have pathology or "un-wellness" in any quadrant, in any level, in any line, in any state, in any type…, and so on. Anything with a moving part can break down.

But in order to spot pathology, you have to be able to know where to look. We have seen that the meditative traditions are using predominately zone-1 methodologies. As such, they have no real understanding or inclusion of structure-stages of development. Boomeritis is a significant dysfunction that can occur in the developmental structuration of an individual, a dysfunction that cannot be seen or diagnosed by the meditation traditions, Christian to Buddhist. This is NOT a fault of zone-1 methodologies, which cannot be expected to spot zone-2 problems. But it is a fault of individuals who only use one of them.

Boomeritis itself was first noticeable in areas like the student protests of the 1960s against the Viet Nam war. The students all claimed that they were protesting the war because it was immoral. Tests of moral development found that some of the students were indeed quite morally developed—in some studies, many of the protesters were postconventional, and they were saying "No!" to a war that they felt was truly wrong, and moreover, they were doing so from *post*-conventional levels. But many of the war protesters were *pre*-conventional, and they were saying "No!" from an egocentric, narcissistic level: basically, go fuck yourself, nobody tells me what to do!

So at the same peace rally, under the same tent, mouthing the same slogans, all saying "Hell, no, we won't go!," were *both* PRE-conventional and POST-conventional responses, and unless you knew what was going on, it looked like the protesters were all saying the same thing and coming from the same place. The war protest—which strongly protested the conventional stance—therefore attracted both postconventional and preconventional responses, and all were given the same high-level rhetoric, so that under the postconventional tent, preconventional flourished. Having a post-conventional situation attract and support and encourage pre-conventional responses is a classic pre/post fallacy, and Boomeritis is a particular version of that pre/post confusion.

More specifically, the Boomer generation was the first to have a significant percentage of its population be at the green waves of development—pluralist, postmodern, relativistic. It was "I do my thing, you do yours," but coming from a fairly high developmental altitude—postconventional, worldcentric, global. But that pluralistic openness and nonjudmentalism re-activated and encouraged very egocentric and narcissistic impulses, and into the postconventional tent came the preconventional parade, with every narcissistic impulse relabeled pluralistic. The Me generation was born.

Boomeritis is post-conventional/worldcentric levels infected with pre-conventional/egocentric levels, or simply and most often, green infected with red (using those colors to mean altitude in any of the lines, of course, and not specific SD vMemes). This green/red complex would often take rather low-level, self-centered feelings and impulses and relabel them with high-level, postconventional, worldcentric words—and actually come to think of its own selfcentric feelings as being very high indeed, even spiritual. And thus, the harder you could express your ego, emote your ego, and feel your ego with real immediate feelings, the more spiritual you were. Into this atmosphere came Buddhism, and thus the religion of no-ego came to be the religion of express your ego. Quite a feat, but welcome to America, boomeritis style.

Many American Buddhists of this generation were, as Boomers, pioneering the green-pluralistic wave of development, which in itself is actually a rather extraordinary achievement. Some of them also took up meditative practices, and could indeed attain very genuine and profound *meditative states* (because all of the states are available at pretty much every stage). But, as always, these meditative states will be interpreted according to the stage one is at. And thus, meditative states were quickly used to support the green-level pluralistic worldview.

At this point, there is not necessarily any *dysfunction* in the AQAL matrix in this particular case. But there are two potential problems here. The first is that many of the great contemplative texts, sutras, and tantras were written in the cognitive line from at least the turquoise and often indigo or violet levels. So **indigo** texts were being *translated downward* into **green** texts simply because both of them could be supported by similar meditative states and attainments. As we have seen, I can come out of a nondual state of awareness, and if I am green, *I will interpret Nonduality in green terms*; if I am indigo, then in indigo terms. The same **state** can be used to support any number of **stages**.

But the second problem is that, I can use those meditative states to support green, and because green pluralism can support and activate red narcissism, the entire meditative corpus can be used to support and prop up green/red personality structures. Hence, **Boomeritis Buddhism**. This is the translation downward of Buddhist texts into dysfunctional green or pathological pluralism. And the use of Buddhism to support and encourage "the narcissism of feelings" (as well as pathological pluralism) is one of the truly difficult situations now fairly rampant as Dharma struggles to be rooted in the West, and extremely high meditative-state training is being used to prop up dysfunctional structures, or DLD.

When nondual states in particular—which, to the extent they can be described, are a type of "all in one, one in all, one in one, all in all" (e.g., Hwa Yen's four principles, Tozan's five ranks)—are translated into words, they can sound very like the pluralistic wave itself, of "everything is mutually interpenetrating," with the odd result that Ati props up Ego.

And the real problem is, none of this can be seen with the tools of Buddhism. Buddhism specializes in zone-1 techniques, **but this is a zone-2 illness.** It simply

cannot be seen or detected in a Buddhist state of mind. As the self-sense grows and develops from red egocentrism to amber conformity to orange rationalism to green pluralism to turquoise integralism to indigo and higher, something can go wrong at any of those stages—there are potential pathologies at any and all of those stages. But if you can't see the stages, you can't see the pathologies.

American Buddhists, bless every one of them (and us), have no idea these zone-2 stages exist; they have no idea that individuals are interpreting their meditative experiences from a particular stage; they have no idea that any of these stages can be dysfunctional and that this dysfunction will not necessarily disrupt meditative-state training; they have no idea that this pathology is therefore invisible on their radar screens but is actually infecting the entire system. And thus this invisible pathology has crept into American Buddhism because it cannot be seen—a silent virus in the operating system that can and often does crash the entire system.

Stay tuned. So far, the virus is winning, but we shall see. But important as this is, it is simply indicative of a larger point: if any system is based on specializing in one of the 8 methodologies, then I might not be able to see any dysfunctions in the other 7 dimensions of my own being. An integrally-informed approach can help with exactly this difficult situation, and an AQAL-graph analysis can help the system begin to self-correct and self-organize in a more comprehensive and inclusive fashion. This would certainly apply to any Integral Spirituality.

Zone 4: Neurophysiology and Dynamical Systems

We can finish this overview by simply mentioning the Right-Hand quadrants and their relation to spirituality in the modern and postmodern world. Because this essay

focuses particularly on the interior or Left-Hand quadrants, I won't go into many details about the Right-Hand quadrants, so forgive the high-level abstract summaries.

The Upper-Right quadrant is the study of the objective organism. The objective or "it-organism" can be viewed from within or without, which we simply term zone-3 and zone-4 approaches to the exterior, respectively.

The **zone-4 approach** to the organism is the most common (3-p x 3-p x 3p), and is generally given the pejorative term "naive empiricism" by those who resent the fact that a triply abstracted and objective view of anything could be called "naive," but who use the term anyway as an academic put-down. The "view from nowhere," as Thomas Nagel wonderfully called it, in another semi-put-down. But it's not really the view from absolutely nowhere, just a 3rd-person view taken again and again and again, so that the homeopathic amounts of 1st-person realities remaining in the approach make it appear that way.

We have spent so much time on the interior or Left-Hand realities, we need to remind ourselves that interior realities are not taken as realities by those of the aforementioned naive disposition. The worldview of "scientific materialism" takes the UR-quadrant as the only real quadrant in reality, and proceeds to attempt to explain the universe as if holons in the UR were its only constitutive elements. This curious homeopathic dilution of human consciousness and spirituality, leaving the universe composed of nothing but frisky dirt, might seem an extremely odd thing to do, and it most certainly is, but that is not my fault.

There are two mistakes we can make, in my opinion, in regard to this quadrant. One is to absolutize it, the other is to deny it. Modernity does the former, postmodernity the latter.

The point from an AQAL stance is that both are equally real and equally important. While the states and stages of consciousness are occurring in the Upper Left, they have correlates in the Upper Right. (They have correlates in all four quadrants, but we are focusing on the individual.) Every **state of consciousness**, including every **meditative state**, has a corresponding **brain state**, for example—they occur together, they are equally real dimensions of the same occasion, and one cannot be reduced to the other.

The problem is that many of the scientific approaches are locked into UR-quadrant absolutism and thus dismiss the interior (UL) realities as being at best "epi-phenomena," or secondary productions of the real reality in the materialistic world (e.g., brain). This approach maintains that the brain produces thoughts the way the eye produces tears. But the brain does not produce thoughts. There is simply an occasion that, when looked at in one way (1-p x 1p), looks like thoughts, and when looked at in another perspective (3-p x 3p), looks like a brain. But thoughts cannot be reduced to brain (materialism) nor can brain be reduced to thoughts (idealism), nor is this an identity thesis (rather, it is a tetra-interactive thesis). But that, needless to say, is another can of worms we needn't open here (for those worms, please see *Integral Psychology*).

The point at hand is simply that research into brain physiology and brain states in the UR is a very important item on an integral agenda. Even better is to correlate those phenomena with phenomena in the other quadrants, which we call **simul-tracking**. Early simultracking research (at least in the individual quadrants and related to states) was first seriously done by Wallace and reported in *Science* journal 1970, indicating that meditation involved a fourth, distinct state of consciousness with distinct physiological footprints. This UR research had an electrifying effect: meditation is real!

Ritchie Davidson and other researchers have continued this important line of research into the UR brain-**state** correlates of UL **states** of consciousness. **Stages** have not yet received attention in this research, probably because this research is done in conjunction with Buddhism and zone-1 approaches, but hopefully in the future this will find its way onto the research agenda.[27]

Unfortunately, one can only fear for how this research is being interpreted by the scientific culture. Scientific materialism is eating this research alive: spirit is nothing but the brain! God reduced to a brain state is now the most common result of this research, sadly. There is a God-spot—heck, a new G-spot—in the organism, this time in the brain. Tickle it and you get quite a thrill. And that's all meditation does—it doesn't give any sort of insight into something real outside of the organism, it simply lights up a spot in the brain that is associated with a blurring or absence of boundaries, a sense of "oneness" with the world, and a loss of cognitive faculties. And so would go quadrant absolutism yet again….

Quite apart from the abuses and reductionism involved with the Upper-Right approaches, an integral approach takes this quadrant and its phenomena very seriously. As related to consciousness studies, the general disciplines in this quadrant include neurophysiology, brain biochemistry, bio-medical psychiatry, evolutionary psychology, genetic factors, brainwave and brain-state study (EEG, PET, etc.). These phenomena, and their AQAL correlations, are of crucial importance and deserve to be seriously investigated.

Is It Real?

When it comes to spiritual realities, the fact that when you are in a meditative state of oneness, the G-spot might light up (or whatever brain correlate is being tracked),

says absolutely *nothing* about the ontological status of the referent in that state. The God-spot activity in the brain is the *correlate* of the meditative state, not its *content*. When I look at an apple, a spot in the brain also lights up, but we do not therefore assume that the apple exists only in the brain. So why should we assume that God exists only in the brain because the same thing happens?

When a state or stage of consciousness is activated in the UL, there is a corresponding brain state that is activated in the UR. The consciousness state (UL) itself often has *signs* that indicate *referents*. The **ontological status** of those referents is determined by various means, the most of which is collective reality check. Thus, for example, I see my dog Isaac. While that UL-consciousness state is occurring, there is an UR-brain state occurring (each event has *correlates* in all 4 quadrants). I might want to convey the fact that my dog is here, so I say, "Hey, come see my dog Isaac." Words such as "dog" and "Isaac" are **signs** that have at least two components, signifiers and signifieds. The **signifiers** are the material words or sounds, "dog" and "Isaac." What comes to mind when you hear or see a word such as "dog" is the **signified**. Isaac the actual dog is the **referent.** If you come and look and you also see Isaac, we generally assume that the referent, Isaac, is real and not just imagined or hallucinated. So in this case, the signifier "Isaac" has a real referent.

Now, what if I say, talking to my friend, "Do you think Sally loves me?" Those signifiers seem simple enough, but they actually involve being able to take a 3rd-person perspective to see the realities involved. So the *referents* of those signs exist only in a worldspace of orange or higher. You simply *cannot see* what that sentence means until then, even though you can see the sensorimotor words and bodies involved. So even though you can hear and see the *signifiers* in that sentence, you cannot get the correct *signified*, nor therefore can you see the actual *referent*. I can see the words, but their

meaning is “over my head,” and I will simply assume that the referent doesn’t exist at all, because I can find no evidence for it whatsoever.

This is something developmentalists have known all along: there isn’t a single pregiven world lying around out there waiting for all and sundry to see. Different phenomenological worlds—*real* worlds—come into being with each new and higher level of consciousness development. Systems theory, for example, which comes into existence around turquoise, simply cannot be seen by orange (or lower) levels of consciousness—global systems are simply “over its head.” These systems exist, they just can’t be seen or brought forth until turquoise. So the signifier “globally-mutually interacting systems” doesn’t appear real until turquoise, at which point the signifier will call up the correct signified and the referent will be seen and understood, more or less.

That is the reason that structuralism (and then poststructuralism) was central to the whole “constructivist” revolution in epistemology. There isn’t the world of “naive empiricism” just lying around out there waiting to be seen. Naive empiricism itself doesn’t exist until orange! Different worlds are brought forth by the structures of consciousness doing the perceiving and co-creating. In AQAL theory, these “con-structing structures” are anchored in all four quadrants (including the Right-Hand or “objective” quadrants), so this never degenerates into the extreme “social construction” of all realities. But a central fact does remain: **the referents of all signifiers exist only at certain developmental stages and states**.

So, take the signifiers “God,” “Emptiness,” and “nirvikalpa samadhi.” Are they “real”? Do they exist? And the only possible answer is: get into the stage or state from which the sentence is being written, and then look for yourself. If you are not in the same state/stage as the author of the signifiers, then you will never have the correct signified, and hence the actual referent cannot be seen. It’s “over my head.”

On the other hand, the virtually unanimous conclusion of those who bring awareness to, for example, the causal state, is that the signifier "Emptiness" has a real referent. The conclusion of those who stably bring awareness to the nondual state is that the signifier "Godhead" has a real referent. And so on. When the G-spot lights up in those cases, you are seeing something just as real as the apple that lights up other parts of the brain.

But without the correct training in states and stages, "Godhead" and "nirvikalpa" and "Buddha-nature" will remain all Greek to you, they will have no real referent or meaning for you. In that case, when a meditator lights up the G-spot, you just won't be able to see what they are seeing, and so you will be forced to assume that it's all "just in the brain."

Silly you. In the meantime, brain-state research like this is quickly being slotted into the scientific materialistic view of things, with the unfortunate result that it probably hurts spirituality more than it helps. But it's absolutely crucial research and most certainly needs to go forward.

Zone 3: Cognitive Science and Autopoietic Systems

We spent the first 90% of this essay talking about interiors, including the scientific studies of the interiors, so we must have covered most of **cognitive science**, right? Actually, almost none of it. To understand why is to understand one of the most fascinating perspectives (and methodologies) available to human beings: the outside view of an inside view of an objective organism (3-p x 1-p x 3p)—or zone-3 approaches to Right-Hand realities.

Autopoiesis

Let me briefly introduce this view by reminding people of what Maturana and Varela did with their rather revolutionary "biological phenomenology," which they also called "the inside view of the organism." They made it clear that they did not mean "phenomenology" in the sense of trying to understand what the organism—let's say, a frog—was experiencing subjectively. They were not trying to reconstruct the "I-space" of a frog (which would be UL phenomenology). Rather, they were simply trying to reconstruct what was available in the subjective-cognitive world of the frog, but they were still thinking about that in objective terms. It was the "inside view" of the frog approached objectively—hence, an objective account (3-p) of the inside or subjective view (1-p) of the frog, which itself is still approached in objective or scientific terms (3p). Thus, **3-p x 1-p x 3p**. That "1-p" or "1st-person" term in the middle is what their **biological phenomenology** or "the view from within the organism" was all about.

And that was enough to revolutionize biology and biological epistemology. At first it shocked the biological world, which was used to using models such as systems theory to understand the behavior of the frog. But Maturana and Varela pointed out that, when it comes to the frog's actual phenomenology, *systems theory plays no role at all*, **it doesn't even exist in the frog's world**. Which is absolutely true. There is a role for systems theory, but that is part of the outside view of the organism, not its inside view.

This approach not only revolutionized biology, but also many of the other scientific approaches to exterior holons. This is the difference between **classical behaviorism** and **autopoietic behaviorism**. The former looks at the objective organism from without (zone 4), the latter, from within (zone 3).

Maturana and Varela originally developed their "view from within" for individual organisms, like the frog (or what we call individual holons). They assumed that social

systems (social holons) were simply a higher level of wholeness than individual organisms, and that they could derive a social system as simply the next level in their hierarchy of autopoiesis. In other words, their developmental holarchy was: individual components are autopoietically brought together into single organisms, which are autopoietically brought together into societies of organisms: cells, organisms, societies. Societies are composed of organisms in the same way that organisms are composed of cells.

Niklas Luhmann, generally regarded as the world's greatest systems theorist, made two very important corrections to that view (both of which are consistent with, indeed predicted by, AQAL theory). Both of these are extremely subtle, difficult issues, but also extremely important, so I will simply mention them, and those interested can follow up with endnote references where these topics are pursued at length.[28]

First, Luhmann pointed out that societies are not composed of organisms, but of the communication between organisms. (For AQAL theory, what is internal to a social system are NOT the members of the system but the exchanged signifiers between the members—essentially, the same thing, if a bit more refined.)[29] Put simply, the Great Web theorists had everywhere assumed that "all organisms are strands in the Great Web," but Luhmann demonstrated that what was internal to the Great Web was not organisms but the communication between them. He corrected Maturana and Varela on this simple but crucial point, and sophisticated systems theorists everywhere followed suit.

Second, he then showed that you could still take the autopoietic perspective and apply that to the internal systems of communication, and then you got the "view from within" the social system. Exactly right. That is the zone-3 approach to the Lower-Right quadrant, in contrast to classical dynamical systems theory (or zone-4), which still

viewed members of the system as part of the system. (For AQAL, both of those perspectives exist, and both of them are useful perspectives, as long as we remember the partiality of both.)

Cognitive Science

To return to zone-3 approaches to the individual (in the UR). Cognitive science, which is now the most widely adopted approach to the study of consciousness (and hence, indirectly, spirituality, if the topic is allowed), is the "official" view of modern science of what is real and not real when it comes to consciousness and its contents. Typical theorists in this area include Jackendoff, Dennett, the Churchlands, Alwyn Scott's *Stairway to the Mind*, and so on….

In essence, what they—and virtually all cognitive scientists—are doing is utilizing the same perspective-space employed by Maturana and Varela. They are trying to create not neurophysiology but "neurophysiological phenomenology"—what the organism and its brain look like from within, but still conceived in essentially objective terms. They are looking at what happens in an it-brain when it perceives it-objects and it-data move through neuronal it-circuits, but always with an eye on the view from within that brain looking out (3-p x 1-p x 3p).

We needn't say too much more here; the textbooks on cognitive science are pretty straightforward, although their quadrant absolutism can make for truncated reading. The most difficult issue this discipline faces is called "the hard problem"—which is the mind/body problem, but now stated in terms of the mind/brain problem, a problem which we might state as: once I have erased consciousness from the Kosmos by the very nature of my methodology, which cannot detect consciousness anywhere, then how can my reductionistic philosophy account for it, which would not recognize the solution

anyway, even if I stumbled on it? I'm not sure they word it exactly like that, but you get the drift. The solution to the hard problem requires methodologies that are not recognized or allowed by the problem. (The way it is usually stated, it can only be solved with satori.)[30]

The discoveries of cognitive science are truly important and form part of any integral theory of consciousness and spirituality, because what cognitive science is discovering are all of the UR correlates of various UL occasions, and only taken together can we even begin to understand human consciousness and its referents, whether those referents be a rock, my dog, or God.

Neurophenomenology

Francisco Varela (a founding member of Integral Institute) went on to develop what he called **neurophenomenology**, an important type of simultracking of various 1st-person and 3rd-person approaches to consciousness. Francisco was a longtime Buddhist meditator, and so he was naturally interested in how to unite interior phenomenology (zone-1 UL) and autopoietic cognitive science (zone-3 UR). This combination of zone-1 phenomenology with zone-3 cognitive science is one of the first serious attempts to get the UL and the UR together based on the latest in science and the best in phenomenology. My major criticism, within that attempt, is that it leaves out zone-2 approaches in the UL and thus has nothing resembling stages, which is a serious lack. But for what it accomplishes, it is a brilliant landmark in the long road to a more integral approach.

The Shadow: Dynamically Dissociated First-Person Impulses

I would like to swing back, very briefly, to the Upper-Left quadrant and, now that we have finished a quick survey of several approaches in both zone 1 and zone 2, discuss the meaning of the unconscious, specifically in the psychodynamic sense. What is the dynamically repressed unconscious?—is it real?—and if so, and what methodologies have accessed it? In short, **the shadow**, whence and whither….

One of the great discoveries of modern Western psychology is the fact that, under certain circumstances, *first-person* impulses, feelings, and qualities can become disowned, dissociated, or alienated, and when they do, they appear as *second-person* or even *third-person* events in my own first-person awareness. This is one of the half-dozen truly great discoveries in zone 1.

To give a highly stylized example: if I become angry at my boss, but that feeling of anger is a threat to my self-sense, then I might dissociate or repress the anger. But simply denying the anger doesn't get rid of it, it merely makes the angry feelings appear alien in my own awareness: I am feeling anger, but it is not my anger. The angry feelings are put on the other side of the self-boundary (on the other side of the I-boundary), and there they appear as alien or foreign events in my own awareness, in my own self. The moment I push the anger on the other side of my I-boundary, it becomes a 2nd-person occasion in my own 1st person. That is, I am aware of the anger, but it is a type of "you" in my own self ("second person" means the person I am talking to, so 2nd-person anger means anger that I am still on speaking terms with). I might sense the angry feelings arise, but they arise in my awareness as if an angry neighbor were knocking on my door: I feel the anger, but I in effect say: "What do *you* want?"—not "I am angry," but "Somebody else is angry, not me"—it *feels* like the anger is not mine. If I continue to deny my anger, it can be completely dissociated or repressed into a *3rd*-

person occasion: my anger can become an "it" or a complete stranger in my own awareness, perhaps arising as the symptom of depression, perhaps displaced onto other people, perhaps projected onto my boss himself.

In other words, in the course of a typical dissociation, when my angry feelings arise, they are converted from my **1st-person** anger into a 2nd- or even 3rd-person **other** in my own awareness: aspects of my "I" now appear as an "it" in my own "I", and these "it" feelings and objects completely baffle me: this depression, IT just comes over me. This anxiety, IT's driving me crazy. These headaches, I don't know where THEY come from, but I get them around my boss. Anything except "I give myself headaches," because this anger, it is no longer mine. I am a nice person, I would never have anger—but these headaches are killing me.

That highly stylized example is meant to highlight a **phenomenological** train of events: certain "I-subjects" can arise in awareness, be pushed away or denied, and the alienated feelings, impulses, or qualities put on the *other side* of the I-boundary: I now *feel* them as *other*. This is not a theory, but something that can be felt in the moment of arising. Once that happens, the feeling or quality does not cease to exist, but *ownership* of it does. These dis-owned feelings can then appear as painful and baffling neurotic symptoms—as "**shadow**" elements in my own awareness. And the goal of psychotherapy, in this case, is to convert these "it feelings" into "I feelings," and thus **re-own the shadow**. The act of re-owning the shadow (converting third-person to first-person) removes the root cause of the painful symptoms, at least as far as this felt meaning is concerned.[31] The goal of psychotherapy, if you will, is to convert "it" to "I."

The entire notion of the psychodynamic unconscious actually comes from this type of experiential evidence and inquiry—it is a thoroughly zone-1 discovery. It is not usually remembered that Freud, for example, was a brilliant phenomenologist, and, in

many of his works, was doing exactly this type of interior phenomenology and hermeneutics (phenomenology in my own 1st person, and hermeneutics when my own 1st-person impulses become 2nd- or 3rd-person impulses and symbols in my own awareness that require hermeneutic interpretation as if I were talking to somebody else: These symptoms, what do they mean?).

This is not a far-fetched reading of Freud, but it is reading obscured by the standard James Strachey translations of Freud. Not many people know that Freud never used the terms "the ego" or "the id." The original German is literally "the I" and "the it," using the pronouns (*das ich*, "the I") and not nouns. In the Strachey translations, a sentence might be: "Thus, looking into awareness, I see that the ego has certain id impulses that distress and upset it." And this sounds like so much third-person theoretical speculation. But Freud's actual sentence is: "Thus, looking into my awareness, I find that my 'I' has certain 'it' impulses that distress and upset the I." Strachey used the Latin terms "ego" and "id" instead of "I" and "it" because he thought it made Freud look more scientific. All it really did is obscure Freud, the brilliant phenomenologist.

Perhaps Freud's best-known summary of the essential goal of psychotherapy is: "Where id was, there ego shall be." What Freud actually said was: "Where it was, there I shall become."

Now, at this point there are a million interesting ways to go with the discussion, but I would like to emphasize just a few short summary points.

--The essential discovery of Freud and an entire lineage of *psychodynamic phenomenology* is that certain *experiential* I-occasions can become you, he, she, they, them, it, or its within my I-space. Certain I-impulses can be dis-owned, and there is a *felt resistance* to re-owning these feelings ("All of psychoanalysis is built upon the fact of

resistance"). In other words, all of these central realities arise within zone 1—they are first-person experiential realities about "I" and "it," not theoretical speculations about egos and ids, whatever those are.

--Around those experiential phenomena (zone 1), various theoretical (zone 2) scaffoldings can be built. Freud, of course, had his own theories about why his patients resisted their own feelings. Not many of this theoretical speculations hold up well, but those zone-2 theories should not obscure the central zone-1 issue: I can deny my own feelings, impulses, thoughts, desires. There is a phenomenology about all of that, a phenomenology that needs to be continually refined and included in any integral psychology.

--Freud is only one of a very large number of Western researchers who attempted not only a phenomenology of present I-symptoms, but a rather extraordinary type of phenomenology of the early stages of I-development. These interior investigators were looking not only at how these early stages of I-development might be conceptualized and researched from without, but also what they might feel like from within. And more than that, how in the early stages of the I, various aspects of my I might become alienated, dissociated, broken, fractured, leaving an entire developmental trail of tears. Viewed from without, this is the standard, psychodynamic, **developmental hierarchy of defenses** (e.g., Vaillant). But viewed from within, it is also the story of the self's journey—the story of my I's journey—during the course of my I's growth and development. Both of those views need to be kept in mind for an integral approach, and although few theorists would see it in exactly those terms (which is how an AQAL perspective discloses it), that development includes the essential *inside story* of the growth—and "dysfunctions"—of my "I." The essential point here is that, especially in the early stages, the 1st-person I can be damaged, showing up later as 3rd-person symptoms

and shadows within my 1st-person awareness. This **phenomenological history of the damaged-I** (especially during the first few years of life) is one of the great contributions of Western psychology, a specific contribution you find nowhere else in the world.

--Here is where that story collides with meditation and contemplation, which are also zone-1 methodologies, but cover decidedly different territories in that zone. Understanding why both are needed is very important, in my opinion. Setting aside the specifically psychoanalytic zone-2 theories about those zone-1 realities, what these "shadow researchers" discovered is that in the early stages of development, parts of the self (parts of the "I") can be split off or dissociated, whereupon the **self** appears as **shadow** and **symptoms** (aspects of I appear as it). Once the repression occurs, it is still possible to experience the anger, but no longer the ownership of the anger. The anger, starting as an I, is now an it in my awareness, and I can practice vipassana awareness on that it as long as I wish, and all that will do is refine and heighten my awareness of it *as an it*. Meditative and contemplative endeavors simply do not get at the original problem, which is that there is a fundamental ownership-boundary problem. Getting rid of the boundary, as meditation might, simply denies and suspends the problem on the plane that it is real. Painful experience—emphasis on painful—has demonstrated time and again that **meditation simply will not get at the shadow**. Here is how AQAL conceptualizes that issue:

--Start with normal or healthy development in the I-line. With each stage of healthy I-development, the "I" of one stage becomes the "me" of the "I" of the next stage. (In theoretical or 3rd-person terms, the subject of one stage becomes the object of the subject of the next stage.) Thus, for example (and to speak very generalized), if I am at the red stage of development, that means that I am completely identified with red, so much so that I cannot see it as object, but use it as subject with which and through which

I see the world. But when I move to the next stage, the amber stage, then red becomes an object in my subjective awareness, which is now identified with amber—thus, my amber subject now sees my red object, but cannot itself be seen. If red thoughts or impulses arise in my I-space, I will see them as my red objects of my (now amber) self. "I have some very angry feelings right now." Thus, the subject of one stage becomes the object of the subject of the next stage. As Robert Kegan says, this is the fundamental process of development itself.

--What that means is simply that with each stage of healthy I-development, *first-person subjective* becomes *first-person possessive* in my I-space: "I" becomes "me" or "mine." A person might say, for example, "I have thoughts, but I am not my thoughts, I have feelings, but I am not my feelings"—the person is no longer *identified* with them as a subject, but owns them as an object—which is perfectly healthy, because they are still *owned* as "*my* thoughts"—if the person actually felt that the thoughts in their head were *somebody else's* thoughts, that is not transcendence, but severe pathology.

--Whereas healthy development converts I into me or mine, unhealthy development, as we have seen, converts I into it. This is one of the significant disclosures of an AQAL perspective, I believe, because those studying transpersonal psychology have long been aware of two important facts, facts which did not mesh. The first is that in meditation, the goal is to detach or **"dis-identify" with whatever arises**. But in pathology, there is a dissociation of parts of the self, so **"dis-identify" is the problem**, not the cure.

And they are both right. If my anger arises in awareness, and is experienced as my anger, then the goal is to continue dis-identification (let go of the anger and the self that is experiencing it—thus converting that "I" into a "me," which is healthy "transcend and include"). But if my anger arises in awareness and is experienced as your anger or

his anger or an it-anger—but not MY anger—the goal is to first identify with and re-own the anger (converting that 3rd-person "his anger" to 1st-person "my anger"—and REALLY own the goddamn anger)—and *then* one can dis-identify with the self that owns the anger (converting 1st-person subjective "I" into 1st-person objective "me"—again, the definition of healthy "transcend and include"). But if that re-ownership of the shadow is not first undertaken, then meditation on anger simply *increases the alienation*—meditation becomes "transcend and deny," which is exactly the definition of pathological development.

--I am aware how sketchy and abstract these examples sound, because of the compressed presentation. But I would like to point out that those two facts about "detachment" or "dis-identification" that were so puzzling can be fairly succinctly stated in AQAL terms: **Healthy development converts I into me, pathological development converts I into it.** The former is healthy dis-identification or healthy detachment or healthy transcendence, the latter is unhealthy dis-identification or pathological dissociation or pathological transcendence or repression.

--The same goes for meditation, which is higher development in the same line. Healthy development and healthy transcendence is the same thing, since development is "transcend and include." The subject of one stage becomes the object of the next, until all relative subjects and selves have been transcended and there is only the Pure Witness or the Pure Self, the empty opening in which Spirit speaks. The I of one stage becomes the me of the next stage until there is only the ultimate I, which is Atman or Pure Presence or I-I, as Ramana Maharshi called it. I becomes me until there is only I-I, and the entire manifest world is "mine" in I-I.

--That is exactly the same healthy line in the I-stream, of turning I into me of the witnessing awareness. But if, at any point in that line, aspects of the I are denied

ownership, they appear as an it, and that is not transcendence, that is pathology. Denying ownership is not dis-identification but denial. **It is trying to dis-identify with an impulse BEFORE ownership is acknowledged and felt**, and that dis-ownership produces symptoms, not liberation. And once that prior dis-ownership has occurred, the dis-identification process of meditation will likely make it worse, but in any event will not get at the root cause.

--In short, healthy development converts 1st-person subjective to 1st-person objective or possessive (I to me or mine), unhealthy development converts 1st-person subjective to 2nd or 3rd person (I to yours, his, theirs, it). The former is healthy dis-identification, the latter is pathological dissociation. Meditation helps the former, exacerbates the latter.

--In more detail, healthy development and transcendence converts events in my subjective-I (which I am completely "identified with" so much so that I cannot see them) into me or mine (which can be seen as an object of my higher subject—I have transcended and included them: **owned** them AND **transcended** them), whereas pathological development converts my 1st-person I into a 2nd- or 3rd-person experience, so that I appear to have transcended them when I have actually dissociated them. Healthy dis-identification has become pathological dissociation. Healthy dis-identification (or detachment or nonattachment) is transcend and include: "I have anger, but I am not my anger" (just as the person would say, "I have thoughts, but I am not my thoughts"). Pathological transcendence or development is, "I am not this anger, and I do not have this anger."[32] Healthy development converts I into me, pathological converts I into it.

--The central point is that when one takes up meditation, **anger will appear as an object of awareness in both cases**. But one of them is shadow anger, one is

owned anger, and meditation not only cannot tell the difference, it exacerbates the dis-identifying and dissociating tendency which created the problem in the first place. "There is anger arising, there is anger arising, there is anger arising…."

The problem is, by the time anger arises as a phenomenological object, the damage has been done. And meditation cannot get at the damage because the attachment to the shadow is unconscious—the hidden identification with the shadow exists in the fact that the shadow is still my own 1st-person impulse, no matter how much I try to deny it, repress it, disown it, and see it as an object. And thus when my shadow-anger shows up as an object or a feeling that I can witness, this is fantastic, because that is exactly what I am trying to do, see my anger not as mine but simply as something impersonal that I can witness or contemplate or feel or transmute. "Letting go of anger" is exactly what the repression is trying to do! Everything except own it as mine, at which point, but not before, I can begin to let go of it.

In short, meditation cannot get at the original damage, which is a boundary ownership problem. In the course of development and transcendence, when the I of one stage becomes the me of the I of the next stage, if aspects of the I are dis-identified with prematurely—as a defensive denial and dis-ownership and dissociation (and this happens in the I *before* they become me, or truly transcended)—then they are split off of the I and appear as an it, not as a me/mine, in my awareness, and thus my object world now contains two entirely different types of objects: those that were once owned correctly, and those that were not. And those two objects are phenomenologically indistinguishable. But one of those objects is actually a *hidden subject*, a hidden I, a subpersonality that was split off of my I, and thus that hidden-I can never truly be transcended because it is an **unconscious attachment** or identification (it can never be truly transcended because it cannot become a me of my I, because my I no longer owns

it). When I witness this anger now, it is your anger or it-anger or his anger, but not my anger. This shadow-anger, which arises as an object like any other object in my awareness, is actually a hidden-subject that was split off, and simply witnessing it as an object again and again and again only reinforces the dissociation. This shadow-anger is a fixation that I will never be able to properly transcend. In order to transcend shadow-anger, that "it" must be made back into an "I," and THEN that "I" can become "me/mine," or truly and actually dis-identified with and transcended.

Getting at this damage, and re-owning the dis-owned facets of the self, is a central part of any integral approach to psychology and spirituality. Dis-identifying with an owned self is transcendence, dis-identifying with a disowned self is double dissociation.

--Now, in this line, both psychotherapy and contemplative spirituality are zone-1 endeavors, and in their own ways, both of them are interested in converting I to me. As we noted, the ultimate transcendence in that line is when all I's have been converted to me's, and experientially nothing but "I-I" remains, or the pure Witness, the pure Atman that is no-atman, the pure Self that is no-self.

Now the contemplative traditions both East and West have clearly taken that line of development much farther than conventional therapy does. But Western psychotherapy made one colossally important discovery: in the early stages of that development, parts of the "I" might be converted not into a "me" but an "it." This "it" is the shadow, and the shadow is a hidden and disowned *subjective* impulse that now appears as object, as other—and this is not healthy transcendence but pathological dissociation. And meditation treats both of them equally, as just that, phenomena that arise in awareness and are to be witnessed with bare attention. But by the time they

appear in awareness as objects, the damage has occurred, and meditation simply seals the otherness of the alienated feelings.

Thus, whereas the contemplative traditions specialize in the higher stages of zone 1, the psychodynamic traditions offer us invaluable lessons about its earliest stages. Of course there is enormous overlap in all of this, but by way of severe generalization, we might summarize the entire drift of this particular discussion by saying that:

Western psychology has made two especially unique and fundamental contributions to a more integral psychology. The first is the general zone-2 approach to the development and evolution of consciousness, an approach that shows us aspects of the development of our own consciousness that we cannot get at from within, that we cannot get at in our own immediate experience and awareness, but rather must stand back from far enough to have them come into focus. When we do so, we get the whole wonderful series of genealogical discoveries—from Nietzsche to Baldwin to Piaget to Graves to Loevinger—which is perhaps the West's greatest contribution to Spirit's own self-unfolding self-understanding. You find none of these stages of consciousness evolution in any of the contemplative or meditative traditions anywhere in the world.

The second uniquely Western contribution is that, if we look at our own immediate awareness and experience, and explore zone 1 in a direct, experiential, phenomenological fashion, giving awareness to this moment, then sooner or later we find various feelings that we are uncomfortable with. If we don't just feel them or witness them or, but explore their origins, we find that certain of these feelings can be veils for hidden realities in my I-space, and an exploration of those leads to the discovery that this contracting and dis-owning process begins early in infancy. Dissolving this I in meditation is not the solution to dis-owning but simply the intensification of the original

irresponsibility. The second major contribution of the modern West is an understanding that, in the early stages of psychological development that should convert each I into a me, some of those I's get dis-owned as its—as shadow elements in my own awareness, shadow elements that appear as others and objects but are actually hidden-subjects, *hidden faces of my own I*. Once dissociated, these hidden-subjects or shadow-its show up as painful neurotic symptoms and diseases. In those cases, therapy is indeed: Where it was, there I shall become.

Where id was, there ego shall be—*and once that happens, then transcend that ego*. Try it before then and watch the shadow grow. But if that identification has first occurred in a healthy fashion, *then* dis-identification can occur; if not, the dis-identifying leads to more dissociation.

The contemplative and meditative traditions, both East and West, lack any clear presentation of **both zone-2 stages and the early pathologies of zone-1 stages**. Where the contemplative traditions do excel—and where orthodox and conventional Western approaches fail miserably—is in trained states of consciousness that push the outer limits of zone-1 realities… literally into states of divine union and nondual realization. Obviously, if forced to choose between the two, one would take the revelations of the contemplative over the conventional. But why, if not forced, would one want to?

A simple one-sentence summary of the foregoing would be this: putting East and West together, we arrive at the "3 s's" in the UL: **the shadow, the stages, the states**. Conventional researchers have discovered the zone-2 **stages** of consciousness development and the early zone-1 **shadow** casualties, whereas the contemplative traditions East and West have plumbed the depths of the major zone-1 **states** of consciousness and how to follow them to their source, gross to subtle to causal to

nondual. Combining all three is the challenge of an integral psychology and integral spirituality.[33]

The Conveyor Belt: A Startling New Role For Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World

The last topic I would like to sketchily address is what might be called "the conveyor belt." It is, I suspect, the single greatest problem facing the world in the interior quadrants, and if you think that is hyperbole, read on.

Start with a few facts. Depending on which scales you use, somewhere between 50-70% of the world's population is at the **ethnocentric or lower** waves of development. This means amber or lower in any of the lines. To put it in the bluntest terms possible, this means around 70% of the world's population are Nazis.

In the great developmental unfolding from egocentric to ethnocentric to worldcentric and higher, 70% of the world's population has not yet made it to worldcentric, postconventional levels of development. Nazis is simply an extreme way to state that fact. And please, no politically correct tsk-tsking here. I'm talking about some of my best friends and most of my family (certainly all of the cousins).

A second fact is that this is not something that goes away or can go away. *Everybody is born at square one* and must develop through the general waves of development. Put it this way: Every time somebody somewhere has sex, they are producing a fresh supply of Nazis.

So 70% is now ethnocentric or lower. This would be enough to rattle the average onlooker. But it gets a bit worse. Who owns the ideas that are subscribed to by this 70%?

Basically, the world's great religions.

To word it differently, in the grand developmental waves available to humans, the archaic, magic, and mythic waves are predominantly the province of the world's great religious systems and mythologies. This in itself is not a bad thing, but in fact is a necessary and absolutely crucial function of the world's great mythologies. Every human is born at square one and begins his or her unfolding from there, moving from archaic to magic to mythic (and possibly higher), and if the world's mythologies were not a repository of these early-level beliefs, every human born would have to reinvent them anew. Part of the great untold saga of the role of the world's religions is that, in at least some ways, they are the vehicle for these necessary (and unavoidable) stages of development.

But in today's world—unlike the great epochs in which the magico-mythic systems developed—these up-to-amber-level beliefs pose certain problems. The first is that there are several levels of consciousness that have developed since those times, particularly modern orange and to some degree postmodern green. This introduces a **vertical component clash** in the AQAL matrix that can be extremely severe, particularly in that the orange and higher levels are postconventional and worldcentric, whereas amber and lower are, as we said, ethnocentric, conventional, and conformist.

In research for *The Many Faces of Terrorism*, I looked at the last fifty or so major terrorist acts around the world, from the Protestant bombing of abortion clinics in the South to Buddhist subway attacks in Tokyo to Sikh separatists in India to Muslim terrorist acts including 9/11.

Astonishingly, they all had the identical psychograph: amber beliefs with red emotional driver.

And they all said exactly the same thing about why they did it (although not using these technical terms): *The orange world will not make room for my sacred amber beliefs*, and I am going to blow it up every chance I get.

The way it is now, people are born and begin growing through the great waves of development, archaic to magic/red to mythic/amber to rational/orange to pluralistic/green to integral/indigo and beyond. They do so, around the world, in cultures whose LL-quadrant generally supports some sort of religious belief system. Somewhere in their development around amber to orange, as they could be making a shift from mythic/ethnocentric spirit to worldcentric/rational spirit, they hit a "steel ceiling." Amber myth is owned by premodern religion, and orange reason is owned by science and the modern world. And they can find no way to move from their amber beliefs to orange beliefs when it comes to their religious faith.

This "pressure cooker" lid exists around the world at this time, wherever ethnocentric, amber, fundamentalist beliefs run into orange reason and postconventional morals. This extraordinary **orange pressure-cooker lid clamping down on amber** is perhaps the single greatest problem facing the world today in the interior quadrants.

Here is a different aspect of the same problem: a recent poll showed that 75% of college juniors say spirituality is very important in their lives, and 3 out of 4 of them pray (!!!). Yet they cannot discuss their faith with their professors (orange to green), who ridicule it, yet they are no longer really comfortable with the mythic and ethnocentric version of their amber beliefs. (Psychographically, this is the same problem faced by the terrorists: amber beliefs find no room in an orange world.)

College students are therefore faced with a brutal choice: continue to believe in the amber-stage of spiritual development (and live in "fundamentalist fraternity" houses,

whose occupants remain at the amber/ethnocentric stage of "anybody who doesn't believe in Jesus is damned in hell forever"), OR renounce their faith.

That is exactly their option—live with amber and embrace Christ or move to orange and renounce Christ—and it is virtually the only option given to these college students. In other words, in the development of their spiritual intelligence, they are frozen at an amber stage (i.e., Fowler's stage 3), and have no avenues where they can explore the orange or higher stages in the development of spiritual intelligence. They are in effect infantilized in their approach to Spirit. Their other option is to renounce their faith and move into the orange and higher levels of development devoid of spiritual orientation. Since both of those choices are horrid, most college students, as the study showed, simply pray in the closet.

Terrorists take another choice.

But both of those problems have the same solution, if differently implemented: *make available and better known the orange (and higher) stages of the development of spiritual intelligence*. As seen above in our simplistic example, there are red and amber and orange and green and turquoise and third-tier interpretations of Christ consciousness. Every religion in the modern world has advocates of orange and green versions of their religious message. Every religious system has these stages, and there are kosher forms of them in every religion. But they are not being emphasized for various reasons (many not spiritual but political). There are a thousand things that could be said about this, but let me move quickly along to make a larger point.

Religion alone, of all of humanity's endeavors, can serve as the great "conveyor belt" for humanity and its stages of growth. And religion *alone* can do this, for several reasons. The first is that the world's religions are the repository of the great myths. The early stages of development are archaic and magic and mythic in flavor. And these

great myths, laid down 3000 years ago, could never be created today, not because humanity has no imagination, but because everybody has a video-camera. Just let Moses try to claim he parted the Red Sea today and see how far he gets.

I say that somewhat facetiously, but actually I am deeply serious. Every infant today begins moving from archaic instincts to magic beliefs to mythic worldviews, and will do so one way or another. Look at Piaget's work and you will see the 5-year old child today produce all the major contours of the world's great myths. The mythic-stages of the religious systems speak deeply to these stages of development, and, to repeat, THOSE STAGES ARE NOT GOING AWAY.

And since humanity today, armed with video-cameras, will never get a new supply of fresh, believable myths—of Moses parting the Red Sea, or Jesus born from a biological virgin, or Lao Tzu being 900 years old when he was born, and so on—the world's great mythic-religious systems are a precious human resource, the only ones speaking to those unavoidable stages of human growth. They got their start with the archaic and magic and mythic stages of humanity itself, and hence are a repository of a precious interior human resource much more scarce than oil and gas—and the world's great religious systems are there to handle those stages in the interior. This is exactly why that 70% is owned by the world's religions.

But the world's great religions are not only that. Precisely because they got their start with the magenta and red and amber stages of humanity itself, they control the *legitimacy* conferred on those beliefs. Because of that, they are the *only* sources of authority that can sanction the orange and higher stages of spiritual intelligence in their own traditions. They are the only systems in the world today that can act as a great conveyor belt, helping people move from red to amber to orange to green to turquoise

and higher, because they alone can pronounce all of those stages kosher, imprimatur, sacred, acceptable, within their own lineages.

That is a perhaps the most important role for religion in the modern and postmodern world, acting as a sacred conveyor belt for humanity in the line of its spiritual intelligence.

Human beings, starting at square one, will develop however far they develop, and they have the right to stop wherever they stop. Some will stop at red, some at amber; some will move to orange or higher; some will develop to a stage, stop for a while, then continue growth; others will stop growing around adolescence and never really grow again. But that is their right; people have the right to stop at whatever stage they stop at.

I try emphasize this by saying that every **stage** is also a **station** in life. Some people will spend their entire adult lives at red or amber, and *that is their right*. Others will move on. But religion alone, of all endeavors, can have a **catechism of the stations in life**: here is a red version of Christ, here is an amber version of Christ, here is an orange version of Christ, here is an indigo version of Christ, and so on.

This is an extraordinary role for any institution to play, and spirituality *alone* can do so, as I said, because it is the only institution allowed to sanction stages that humanity in its infancy and childhood passed through, now encoded in its mythic-level versions of its spiritual message. This is categorically not the case with medicine, law, physics, biochemistry, architecture, etc., who jettison their childhood versions and adopt only the latest of today's findings. We do not see physicians today recommending leeches, nor astronomers teaching astrology. But we do find preachers doing so. And that is fine—teaching magic and myth—as long as the great religions also make available—as kosher—the orange and higher levels and stages of their spirituality,

stages that have kept pace with Spirit's own unfolding into the modern and postmodern and integral ages….

Religion alone can step in and undo the steel lid, the pressure-cooker lid, now encircling the earth and choking its interiors to death. Until then, terrorists will keep trying to blow up that lid, and college students will pray in the closet trying to avoid it.

Higher Stages, but Also Higher States

The second major role for religion in the modern and postmodern world? Not only make orange and higher **stages** available, but also make contemplative **states** the core of their training, or at least a core offering. The nice thing about this role is that states are available at every stage—and therefore every station—in life. Authentic spirituality is available not just at the higher stages of development (or the transpersonal second and third tier stages—which is meaning or dimension #1 of spirituality), but aspects or dimensions of spirituality are available as authentic religious experiences (or states) at any of those stages or stations (which is meaning or dimension #2). So there is literally something of deep profundity to offer individuals at every stage or station in life. One can take up meditation, contemplation, or centering prayer whether one is at red, amber, orange, green, etc., and plumb the depths of those dimensions.

(Can somebody who takes up meditation at, say, amber, achieve anything like enlightenment? The answer appears to be yes and no—and for this issue, please see the Appendix.)

Right now, spiritual state-experience is often forced off stage and into evangelical revivalist meetings and pentecostal meetings, which are usually subtle-state experiences and altered states of an occasionally deep nature—reaching into Underhill's state of

illumination and grace—but they are kept segmented into red and barely amber stages of development. But again, the good news is that a variety of gross to subtle to causal to nondual states are available at red and amber and orange and green…. So this truly gives the great religions a menu of humanity's grand potentials, possessing both great depth and great span.

For the more advanced spiritual practitioner, there are the stages of spiritual intelligence that continue to develop into orange, green, turquoise, indigo (and higher), and all the techniques that can help people grown and transform through those levels, as well as the meditative states-training that continues to serve as a primary means of contemplative practice at any stage. (Combining those is one of the goals of Integral Transformative Practice.)[34]

So here is the overall picture I wanted to convey in this section:

Everybody is born at square one. There will always be people at red, and that is fine. There will always be people at amber, and that is fine. There will always be people at orange, and that is fine…, and so on. An enlightened society would always make room for that by recognizing that stages in development are stations in life. And somebody can stop at any of those stations (of Spirit's own unfolding) and they deserve honor and respect at whatever station they are at.

But the earlier stations—archaic to magic to mythic—are stages that, nonetheless, are stages that humanity's leading edge passed through in its infancy, childhood, and adolescence. But because religion alone is the repository of the myths created during those times, religion alone is the institution in today's world that gives *legitimacy* to those earlier stages and stations for men and women. Religion alone gives legitimacy to the myths. And religion alone owns that 70% of the world's population at those stages.

All of which is good and beautiful. But precisely because of its ownership of the pre-rational heritage of humanity (and the pre-rational corpus of the great myths), religion alone can help its followers move from the pre-rational, mythic-membership, ethnocentric, absolutistic version of its message to the rational-perspectival, worldcentric, postconventional versions of its own message. *This jump from ethnocentric amber to worldcentric orange is the great leap that religions alone can help humanity make*.

The great religions alone can be the conveyor belt that gives *legitimacy* (in both the sociological and religious sense) to the orange (and higher) versions of their essential story and their essential spirituality. This is a difficult jump, as everything from terrorists to closeted college students attest. This difficulty is best analyzed using quadrants:

In the UL, psychologically, an individual needs to move from ethnocentric beliefs to worldcentric beliefs. This is a difficult transformation from a role-based identity to a person-based identity. But this allows the individual to adopt a postconventional, worldcentric moral stance and not just an ethnocentric, us-versus-them mentality. For an individual with a Christian-faith background, the leap comes in realizing that Jesus Christ can be my personal savior, but that others may find a different path that leads to the same salvation—that the Holy Spirit speaks to men and women in different ways, in different tongues, in different lands, but is fully present nonetheless.

Crucially, in the LL, the individual needs to feel that his or her religion supports a truly universal or catholic Jesus, and not merely an ethnocentric creed. In some cases, this is a hotly contested issue, with, for example, Vatican II opening the door and the last two Popes trying to close it.

How this will be institutionalized (in the LR) will help determine the behavior (UR) that is appropriate for a person of faith in the modern and postmodern world. Will there be a conveyor belt that they can ride from pre-rational to rational to trans-rational, or will religion remain merely the repository of humanity's childhood?

If chooses the latter, then all around it, the other disciplines (law, medicine, science, education) will continue to move into the things that adults do, and religion will remain the things that children (and adult children) do—like blow up things. But if religion lives up to its promise as being that endeavor in humanity that allows Spirit to speak through it, and Spirit is indeed evolving in its own manifestation, then religion can become a conveyor belt for humanity, carrying it from the childhood productions of Spirit to the adolescent productions of Spirit to the adult productions of Spirit… and beyond that into the great tomorrow of Spirit's continuing display.

This, surely, is the great role for religion in the modern and postmodern world.

Ego, Soul, and Sprit

In this abstract overview of the various methodologies that an Integral Spirituality would involve—basically, Integral Spirituality is Integral Methodological Pluralism applied to the domain of spirituality—I have studiously avoided taking a 1st-person stance within any of the 8 fundamental perspectives involved—I have rather taken a 3rd-person view of those other views (i.e., an AQAL-IT view). This means that I have also stayed out of attempting to comment what is actually seen from any of those perspectives in any sort of detail, and thus I have avoided extended discussions about whether any of this stuff is "really real." I believe those discussions are extremely important and very fruitfully addressed, inasmuch as those 8 perspectives, which are also 8 methodologies, have

their own validity claims. There is definitely a proof for God's existence, within those paradigms.

But let me close by making a positive assertion about the ego, the soul, and the Self. There are numerous different meanings for each of those, and I don't mean to deny any of them. I just did not want the discussion of the W-C Lattice to go without pointing out another way it can be interpreted. In various books, such as *One Taste* and *Integral Psychology*, I have suggested that each of the three great states of gross-waking, subtle-dream, and causal-formless has a self or 1st-person center. The self of the waking state is the **ego**; the self of the subtle state is the **soul**; the self of the causal formless is the selfless **Self**, or pure Spirit.

I believe this formulation works wonderfully with all the complex requirements of an AQAL reality. First of all, because these major natural states are available at virtually every stage—and because even an infant wakes, dreams, and sleeps—then even an infant has an ego, soul, and Spirit. It just wouldn't work if soul and Spirit were only higher transpersonal levels, would it? Of course, at those higher levels, then aspects of soul and Spirit can shine even more brightly in certain worldcentric ways. But since states are ever-present, then ego, soul, and Self are ever-present.

In the normal human being, who is identified with the ego, the material world and the felt body have been transcended during early development, at which point the ego says, I have a body, I am not my body. And that is fine. The subject is now the ego-self, and world and body are now my objects in a healthy sense.

What happens in meditative development is that, as Wakefulness pushes through gross and into subtle, the ego becomes an object of the soul. The soul is now the subject or self of awareness (and not its unrealized background). As for attachment in the gross realm, it is not the ego, but the exclusive identification with the ego, that is

the problem. The ego is not lost, but an exclusive identification with the ego is transcended. The ego is now my ego, not the I-ego (in other words, that I has been turned into me/mine. If in that process, aspects of the ego-I are dis-owned as ego-its, then that is pathology, not transcendence, as we discussed.) For one who is centered in the soul, the ego and the body and the world arise in my awareness as my objects in a healthy sense: I am identified with none of them, but they arise in my awareness.

As Wakefulness pushes from the subtle into the causal, the soul becomes object of the Self. (If, in that process, aspects of the I-soul are split off as its, that is soul pathology, not transcendence.) The Self, as formless emptiness or ayn, is the Witness or great I-I that is pure Subject and can never be made object of any sort, announcing the very End of the Line of consciousness development and transcendence. For one centered in centerless Emptiness, the soul and the ego and the body and the world all arise as objects or phenomenal play of my awareness (where “my” means “of the I-I”).

One can push through turiya into turiyatita, of course, as the Witness or Self dissolves into Nondual suchness, but we will let it go at this point. And, of course, each of those great transitions is often met with a dark night, which involves breaking the attachment to the senses, the attachments to the soul, and the attachments to the Self. (See fig. 8. The stages of Anu yoga are listed here as well, which particularly follow those developments in detail.)

Each of those three great selves can be awakened and realized, in the manner outlined, but each of those selves is nonetheless present from the very beginning stages, even in an infant, whether fully realized or not, because even infants wake, dream, and sleep. What is so nice about this way of looking at it is that these very high developments are not conceptualized in a way that robs children of their souls, but at the same time doesn’t ascribe to children things found only in saints….

Add one more piece of information. That horizontal progression of Wakefulness through the 3 major realms (and their selves) is actually the horizontal scale in a W-C Lattice that ALSO includes vertical developments in consciousness—archaic to magic to mythic to rational to pluralistic to integral and higher, and people can be advanced (or not) in either of those currents. Putting these two currents together—states/selves and stages—gives a very good sense of the three-dimensional nature of development that is actually occurring in human beings and disclosed from an AQAL perspective.

The AQAL Matrix

The AQAL matrix (of "all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, all types") can be derived in any number of ways. The most straightforward is simply to acknowledge the existence of the most widely used methodologies in human history. Simply allow the existence of empiricism, and phenomenology, and contemplation, and systems theory, and hermeneutics, and behaviorism… and then add up what you have. Give the human beings using those methodologies the decency of supposing that they know what they are doing, and are doing the best they can, instead of assuming that they are complete idiots caught in total error. If you grant them that decency, and allow the results of all of those fundamental and time-tested methodologies, the result is something like the AQAL matrix of possibilities arising in this moment.

Of course, AQAL is not the only way to do so, and it might not be the best way, it is simply the only way that I know of at this time. But whatever we decide on AQAL as a meta-theory itself, it should never be forgotten that it is a meta-theory based on the totality of the methodologies mentioned—that is, it is a meta-theoria derived from a meta-praxis. It is the result of a *practice* of inclusion, not a theory about inclusion. A methodology is a practice, an injunction, an exemplar, a paradigm, and AQAL is simply a

meta-paradigm of simultracking at least 8 methodologies, and one of the ways to conceptualize the relationship of all of the resulting experiences is the AQAL matrix. But the practices come first, the theory follows.

In any event, the AQAL framework is useful primarily as a reminder that the multidimensional evidence from at least 8 methodologies needs to be taken into account in any overview of an endeavor, and certainly something as important as religion, spirituality, and science in the premodern, modern, and postmodern worlds.

APPENDIX. The Need for Post-Metaphysics

I will repeat the first paragraphs of "The Sliding Scale of Enlightenment," since this appendix picks up from there, and then move into the main points:

Now the hard part of the Gordian knot. The problem can be stated in several different ways.

--if evolution occurs, how can enlightenment have any meaning? Enlightenment is supposed to mean something like being one with *everything*, but if *everything is evolving*, and I get enlightened today, then won't my enlightenment be partial when tomorrow arrives? Do I become unenlightened with the sun's dawn?

--a typical response is to say that enlightenment is being one with that which is *Timeless* and *Eternal* and *Unborn*, but all that does is create a massive duality in Spirit—the timeless and eternal versus the temporal and evolving—and so what I am really saying is that enlightenment is being one with half of Spirit.

--we saw that a "nondual mysticism" was a "union with *everything* in the gross, subtle, and causal realms." But you can have a nondual state experience at virtually any stage, including magic and mythic, and, e.g., the mythic world does NOT contain phenomena from the higher stages. So you can have a realization of nondual ever-present awareness that is a pure UNITY experience right now, but that experience leaves out a great deal of the universe. Thus satori can actually be unity with a fragmented world. Generally speaking, this is not good.

All of the above are variations on the same difficulty, but to make matters worse, that's just the beginning of the problem (call it part A), which can be summarized as

follows. The universe—or the manifest universe, anyway—is evolving. Even if Spirit is defined as the union of Emptiness and Form (where Emptiness is timeless, unborn, unmanifest, and not evolving, and Form is manifest, temporal, and evolving), the "temporal" or "world-of-Form" part puts a stress on the meaning of enlightenment that is not easily remedied. The manifest world of Form is evolving and becoming more complex—it is becoming Fuller and Fuller and Fuller over time…. And therefore whatever enlightenment I may attain today is not going to be as FULL as an enlightenment I might attain a decade, a century, a millennium from now. If I maintain otherwise, I revert to enlightenment being defined only as a realization of the timeless and unborn, and then I must deny that Spirit is also the world of manifest Form, and thus I have a very dualistic Spirit.

Several theorists, such as David Deida, have made a wonderful distinction that helps us phrase this part of the problem. Emptiness is Freedom and Form is Fullness. Enlightenment is a union of both Emptiness and Form, or a union of Freedom and Fullness. To realize infinite Emptiness is to be **free** from all finite things, free from all pain, all suffering, all limitation, all qualities—the *via negativa* that soars to a transcendental freedom from the known, a *nirvikalpa samadhi* beyond desire and death, beyond pain and time, longing and remorse, fear and hope, a timeless Dharmakaya of the Unborn. On the other side of the street, if to be one with Emptiness is the ultimate Freedom, to be one with the world of Form is the ultimate Fullness—one with the entire manifest realm, one with the Rupakaya (Form Body) in all its glory, finding that eternity is in love with the productions of time. Thus, Enlightenment as the union of Emptiness and Form is also Enlightenment as the union of Freedom and Fullness.

I believe that is very true. Part A of the problem is that the Fullness is evolving and becoming Fuller and Fuller and Fuller, and thus your enlightenment today is less

and less and less than tomorrow's. And you can't explain that away as not really counting unless you violate nonduality in a fundamental way (by implying that only half of the equation really counts). This was not a problem for the great wisdom traditions, because *they didn't know* that the world of Form was evolving, and so this problem never entered their radar screens. The world of Form held still for them, but today we know that it actually unfolds, it actually evolves…. So the union of Emptiness and Form is somehow the union of the Unborn and evolution.

It might seem that we could handle this part of the problem by simply saying, at any given time in evolution, enlightenment is simply being one with Emptiness and the world of Form at that time. To be one with everything simply means to be one with everything at that particular time. Thus, for example, a tundra shaman could have a nondual unity experience and be one with emptiness and one with the world of all form at that time. There was nothing else to be one with, so that covers everything at that time, which is everything there is to worry about. There was nothing Fuller at that time, so there was no higher unity than that. Subsequent eras might be Fuller, and then to be one with everything would involve that. You can't compare the "Unity" of one time with the "Unity" of a later time because they are apples and oranges. Unity is Unity, and that solves that problem.

And it does solve that problem, until you bring in the stages discovered by Western researchers. Which brings us to part B of the problem. If part A can be handled by the foregoing paragraph, part B cannot, and it is a problem that starts to become apparent even using the metaphysical maps of the wisdom traditions themselves. Once you start seriously confronting part B, it simply but rather completely unravels the entire metaphysical interpretations of spiritual realities—not the spiritual realities themselves, but their interpretations as *metaphysics* (and brings us, I believe,

inexorably to “post-metaphysics” as the only way to defend spiritual realities in an unobjectionable fashion in the modern and postmodern world).

The metaphysical systems of the great wisdom traditions typically involve something like the **Great Chain of Being**—the notion that there are, indeed, **levels of being and knowing**—such as the levels of Plotinus (which became the default levels of NeoPlatonism throughout the West, from Dionysius to Eckhart), the **Sefirot** of Kabbalah, and the **8 vijnanas** (8 consciousnesses) of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.

Now the traditions believed that the Great Chain was given all at once, and thus it exists in its entirety right now, even if parts of it aren’t realized or awakened to. And that understanding is what comes unraveled when it is realized that the Great Chain actually unfolded over vast stretches of astronomical and geological time. The lower 4 or 5 levels of the Great Chain are usually given as matter, sensation, impulse, emotion, symbols, concepts (as found, e.g., in the skandhas)…. But those levels arose over 14 billion years of evolution: matter arose with the big bang, sensation with the first life forms, impulse with the first reptiles, emotion with the first mammals, symbols with the first primates, concepts with the first humans….

The amazing thing is how accurate those levels turned out to be; it’s just that they unfolded over millions and billions of years. So the easiest way to try to salvage the Great Chain of the wisdom traditions when confronted with this evidence is to simply say, fine, the levels in the Great Chain are actually unfolding over long stretches of time. But if that’s so, and enlightenment is the union of emptiness and all form, then the only way to get enlightened is to wait until all of time has unfolded.

That’s part B. The very nature of enlightenment—and spiritual realities across the board—changes dramatically once you are forced to account for the Fuller and Fuller and Fuller part. You can still realize Emptiness and attain absolute Freedom, but on the

Fuller side of the street, there are fatal flaws hidden in the realization and the entire metaphysical system built around not recognizing the problem. Modernity and postmodernity recognized the problem but jettisoned the realities, when all they should have ditched was the metaphysical interpretations of the realities.

If we do so, the first thing that has to happen is converting the **levels of knowing and being** (whether Sefirot, 8 vijnanas, or charkas) from pre-existing, ontological levels or planes of reality into levels that have themselves evolved. Charles Peirce spoke of natural laws as being more like natural habits, and I agree: we call them **Kosmic habits** or **Kosmic memories**, and that is what the levels of development are. When they first emerged, the form they took was relatively open and creative, but once a particular response occurred time and time again, it settled into a Kosmic habit harder and harder to shake.

Thus, using value structures as an example, about 50,000 years ago, the magenta value structure (magical-animistic) was about the highest that humanity had evolved. But certain highly evolved individuals began to push into new and creative modes of being and knowing, and they began making responses from a higher level of complexity and consciousness. As more and more individuals shared those responses, the red value structure (egocentric, power) began to be laid down as a Kosmic habit. The more it was laid down, the more of a fixed habit it became. Around 10,000 BCE, as the red value structure dominated humanity's responses, a few heroic individuals began pushing into a response that involved more consciousness, more awareness, more complexity—and the amber value structure (absolutistic) began to be laid down for the first time.

In the worldview line, this move from magic to mythic involved the creation of extensive systems of mythology that, whatever else they did, allowed the creation of

much more complex social systems. Magic could only unify, or socially unite, humans based on blood-lineage and kinship ties. Unless you were related to me by blood, there was no way we could create a "we," and thus, at magic, tribes could not be united with each other socially or culturally. But one of the functions of myth is that, in claiming to be descended from a God not of blood and kind but of values and beliefs, mythology could unite vast numbers of humans and nonkinship tribes if they all adopted the same mythic God: everybody can believe in this or that God, even if they are not blood-related. Thus the twelve tribes of Israel could be united under Yahweh, and the Prophets (or one variety of them) brought amber law and true belief to the red pagan cultures around them, uniting and creating one peoples under one mythic God.

At this point in evolution—around 4000 years ago—here is what would be available (to put it very simplistically): As for levels of consciousness (levels of knowing and being, which the Great Chain theorists took to be fixed and given), humans had evolved from **archaic** ape to **magenta** magic to **red** power to **amber** mythic-membership. All four of those levels of consciousness in numerous lines were now available to humans (since everybody is born at square one and has to develop through these now "fixed" levels, fixed only because they have settled into Kosmic habits). And a few heroic souls would be pushing into **orange** and a bit beyond. But none of these levels are Platonic givens; they are not pre-existing ontological structures in some eternally fixed Great Chain; they evolved and were laid down by factors in all four quadrants as they developed over time and became Kosmic habits of humanity, habits available to all future humans—in fact, handed to all future humans as deeply set habits that for all practical purposes are fixed, and thus levels that, to a Great Chain theorist, would definitely appear eternally given but actually evolved). No metaphysical baggage—no archetypes, no ontological planes of reality, no independent levels of

being that are lying around waiting to be seen by humans—none of that is needed in order to get the same results and explain the existence of these "fixed" levels.

At that same period (4000 years ago), as humans, they also had waking, dreaming, and deep sleep states, which could be peak experienced in various forms of mysticism—nature, deity, formless, and nondual. Although those states are ever-present, humanity as a whole seemed to learn to master them in roughly the same order as meditators do today: moving from exterior gross immersion (paganism) to deity mysticism (ascending and transcendental) to formless Abyss (the great axial age) to ever-present Nondual. Unlike structures, however, there is much fluidity in the sequence of states, and individuals can peak experience any of these states to various degrees. But during the great mythic (amber) eras around the world, humanity as a whole was exploring the heavenly realms of the subtle-dream world: humanity not only moved from red power tribes to amber mythic-membership societies *structurally*, their most evolved religious figures moved from *states* of nature pagan mysticism to interior deity mysticism and prophetic vision, the confrontation with a luminosity and creative source not of this world (although even higher states were sometimes available).

So let's pause here and recall the original question: how can we define enlightenment in a way that has any meaning during that time? Would it even exist during that period, when humanity structurally was deeply ethnocentric (amber)? If so, what would enlightenment consist of? And if we find a definition of enlightenment that works for that period, can it believably be applied to today?

Recall that the generic definition of Enlightenment is the full realization of, or being one with, Emptiness and all Form. Many lesser spiritual experiences and realizations are possible, but we are taking "Enlightenment"—from now on, with a capital "E"—as a type of end limit of the fullest and highest spiritual realization possible.

So how can we define Enlightenment with this in mind? Suggested answer: Enlightenment is the realization of oneness with all states and all structures that are in existence at any given time.

Stabilization in causal emptiness provides the Freedom at any given time; but the world of Form evolves, not according to a predetermined plan, but as an evolutionarily creative process. This process can certainly be seen as Spirit's creative sport and play (which I believe is true, and removes us from scientific materialism of various forms), but the "levels in the Great Chain" simply no longer pre-exist or are needed to get the desired results. As the world of Form evolves, then what is required to be one with that world is for individuals to have evolved and developed in their own case up to *the highest levels now in existence*. Higher than that, there isn't, "ontologically" speaking.

But an individual can realize a complete oneness only by moving through not just the available structures, but also the available states. Thus, an enlightened person is somebody who, at any given time, has developed to the highest available structures in the Kosmos at that time, and navigated through the available states (i.e., brought Wakefulness through the states, from gross to subtle to causal to nondual).[35]

The general contours of this definition of Enlightenment work very well in explaining the "sliding scale" of evolutionary Enlightenment: the Emptiness stays the same—Timeless, Unborn, Unmanifest, Undying—but the Form continues to evolve, and Enlightenment is being one with both of them, a oneness that, on the Form side of the Fuller and Fuller and Fuller street, includes levels in the Kosmos that are being laid down now, not as Platonic archetypes, but as evolving Forms, Forms that, once they are laid down, appear indeed as if they were eternally given as pre-existing ontological structures but are actually Kosmic habits.

So, to return to the mythic (amber) era in our simplistic example, in order to be one with the world of Form (the Fuller side of the street), what exactly would a spiritual figure have to be one with—what does "one with all Form" involve at that time? In the world of Form, there are now in existence 4 levels of being and knowing that are given and "fixed" as Kosmic habits (IR, magenta, red, amber). These levels are now **actual structures** in the Kosmos, and thus in order for a person to be one with all Form, they would have to have transcended and included all 4 of those levels in their own development: they would have to have moved from archaic to magical-animistic to red power to amber-mythic structure (converting those subjects to objects that are "transcended and included" in awareness). Doing so, they would indeed have transcended and included the entire world of Form in their own being—**there are no higher levels anywhere** waiting to drop down from Platonic heaven, so a perfect oneness could in fact be achieved, at least in this variable.

How about the states variable? If an individual has taken Wakefulness from the gross into the subtle, causal, and nondual states, so that those states are mastered to some degree (converting subjects to objects that are then included in awareness or consciousness), then they would be able to realize a oneness with all of those phenomenal worlds as well. Having done both, then in the entire Kosmos, there are no higher levels or structures or domains available—this person would quite literally, in any meaningful sense of the words, have realized a oneness with the entire Kosmos, with both Emptiness and Form in all of its levels. This person, some 4000 years ago, would be as deeply Enlightened as Enlightened could be.

And notice that this individual would be deeply ethnocentric. He or she would have no choice; there are no worldcentric (or postconventional) structures anywhere in the Kosmos that have yet evolved. No matter how deeply realized and fully mastering

all available states and stages, this person would of necessity believe salvation exists only for one chosen peoples, or one class, or one sex, or one path.

Somewhere around the first millennium BCE, the next major level of consciousness, orange, began to emerge as a creative response to problems that could not be solved by amber. (This new evolutionary emergent can be viewed, as evolution in general can, as the creativity of Spirit expressing itself through its own AQAL manifestation.) As orange was being laid down as a Kosmic habit, or the sedimentation of creatively emergent choices of humanity in the face of new challenges, humanity as a whole was pushing its mastery of states from subtle-dream into causal-formless. The combination of worldcentric structures and causal-state access caused a worldwide explosion of growth in consciousness, known in general as the great Axial Age. Around the world at that time (c. 6th century BCE), you find individuals not only advocating worldcentric or postconventional morality for the first time, but also sages who begin to speak of an infinite causal Abyss or nirvana entirely Free of the woes of this samsaric world, or you find a claim that the individual soul and God are one in Godhead ("I and my Father are One"). All of these were startlingly new realizations, as humanity continued its creative evolution.

Cut to today, where 2 or 3 new, major, universal structures have been laid down since the Axial Age. In today's (Western) culture, about 40% of the population is at amber, about 50% at orange, 20% at green, and 2% at turquoise. Are there any higher levels available? Not states, but structures/levels? The answer appears to be yes, there seem to be at least 3 or 4 structures higher than turquoise. These, too, are not pre-existing ontological or metaphysical structures already existing somewhere, but are the first very tentative structures being laid down by highly evolved souls pushing into new territory—and co-creating it as they do so (which is always the case with structures; or

as we say, tetra-creating it). I have listed some of these higher levels in figure 6 in the cognitive line: above vision-logic or the higher mind, we have the global mind, the meta-mind, the overmind, and the supermind, with higher ones in the making, no doubt. In the self line, Susann Cook-Greuter has investigated the first two of these higher levels in the self line, which she tentatively has named "construct-aware" and "ego-aware." These are permanent structural competences, not states.

If you think of these structures/levels as Kosmic habits, then the older the level, the more deeply it has become etched into the Kosmos. I use the analogy of the Grand Canyon: it is so old that it is cut several kilometers deep. That would be like the red level, which began around 50,000 years ago and is cut very deep into the Kosmos. Amber, which began around 10,000 years ago, would be a Kosmic canyon maybe 500 meters deep. Orange, which began around the Axial but really flowered with the Western Enlightenment, is perhaps 100 meters deep. Green, which as a significant percentage of the population began in the 1960s, is only 10 meters deep. Turquoise is really just being laid down, and is maybe 1 meter deep. Structures higher than turquoise are like people dragging sticks across the ground, starting to cut Kosmic habits into the universe. Indigo is maybe 3 or 4 centimeters deep, and ultraviolet is little more than a scratch on the surface of one's Original Face….

So in today's world, what would constitute Enlightenment? What are the highest states and stages available in the Kosmos? At the very least, it would mean indigo in the cognitive and self lines, as well as a mastery of nondual states (which includes access to gross, subtle, and causal states). All sorts of other possible realizations exist, some of them very profound. But "total realization" or "Enlightenment" would include being one with the states and stages that exist at any given time, and today that means: at least indigo altitude and nondual states.

Notice that somebody today who was at mythic-membership amber, even though they might have fully mastered gross, subtle, causal, and nondual states (including Anu and Ati Yoga), would not and could not be fully Enlightened.

The same structure that 4000 years ago could be said to be fully Enlightened, is no longer so today. Somebody at mythic-membership today is no longer one with all Form, because there are, "over the head" of amber, the orange and green and turquoise structures. Those are now real, "ontological," actually existing structures in the Kosmos, as real and as existing as if they were Platonic eternal givens, and if a person has not transcended and included those levels in their own development, then there are huge levels of reality that the amber person is not one with. Even if they master nondual states of a perfect union of Emptiness and Form, there are aspects of Form that never enter this person's world, and thus—exactly as we were meant to explain—this person's satori is oneness with a partial world.

Whereas, in the mythic/amber era, the same realization was oneness with the entire world, and thus counted as full Enlightenment. Thus this definition of Enlightenment fits all the requirements that we started with, requirements generated by A and B of part 2 of the Gordian knot (although, tell you the truth, I forgot what 1 and 2 and A and B actually mean. But I'll make sure that all fits together).

But you get the point: we started with a handful of extremely subtle problems generated by evolution in the world of Form. We found that only a post-metaphysical approach could handle them; and further, that there is a definition of Enlightenment that is meaningfully sliding, and thus can honor the timeless, unchanging, ever-present Emptiness of the great Unborn, as well as the temporal evolution of the ever Fuller and Fuller world of Form. Realization today is not Freer than Buddha's (Emptiness is Emptiness), but it is Fuller than Buddha's (and Fuller and Fuller down the road)—and yet

both the Buddhas of 2000 years ago and the Buddhas of today are equally enlightened by any meaningful definition of Enlightenment. (But, by the same token, a 2000-year-old path is no longer alone the carrier of today's Enlightenment.)

And none of that requires any metaphysical baggage of the Great Chain variety. All of the ontologically pre-existing levels of being and knowing—from the 8 vijnanas of Yogachara to the Sefirot of Kabbalah—which both modernity and postmodernity absolutely savaged, are simply no longer needed. (We can generate the essentials of every one of those levels but in a completely post-metaphysical way). Kant, in an argument accepted by both modernity and postmodernity in a variety of forms, demolished their ontological referents—and rightly so—and placed a demand for the existence of a worldspace on the epistemological grounding of that space, which an AQAL post-metaphysics does. This "post-Kantian, post-metaphysics" is almost certainly the only avenue open to a spiritual philosophy in the modern and postmodern world.

(Endnotes and references forthcoming.)